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PAPAL TYRANNY IN THE REIGN OF KING JOHN

BY COLLEY CIBBER

1745

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PAPAL TYRANNY

In the REIGN of

KING JOHN.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL in *Covent-Garden*.

By His MAJESTY's Servants.

By COLLEY CIBBER, Esq;

Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum. LUCRETIVS.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WATTS at the Printing-Office in *Wild-Court*
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D E D I C A T I O N.

restrain my Vanity from taking any Advantage of this Success, till your Lordship's farther Approbation has pass'd those Favours into a legal Act of Grace. All I can say in excuse of my Presumption is, that, if I could have found a Judge more learned in the Dramatick Laws, your Lordship had not been troubled with this Appeal; and though I offer it at a Time when your Attention to Causes of a quite different Nature will scarce leave You Leisure to look upon more than the Title-page; yet am I not so impatient for Fame, as to conclude I can have any Right to it, till Your Lordship's Opinion has decreed it me. Or if, at worst, it should fall short of that Honour, even Your Dispraises have so uncommon a Charm in them, that if my Vanity could be quiet, I am not sure I should not chuse, even in so tender a Point, to deserve them: Your Rallery on my Errors has sometimes given me more Pleasure than the daintiest Compliments of a flat Civility. But as the Publick is not bound to indulge me in so extravagant an Excuse for my Defects, I must allow
they

D E D I C A T I O N.

they have a Right to be as severe upon them as they please; reserving to my self the Resolution to be still contented, if Your Lordship should be favourable to me.

I shall not trouble your Lordship with a critical Examen, or Comparifon between this Play and the *King John* of *Shakespear*, any farther than just to mention the principal Motive that first set me to work upon it.

In all the historical Plays of *Shakespear* there is scarce any Fact, that might better have employed his Genius, than the flaming Contest between his insolent *Holinefs* and *King John*. This is so remarkable a Passage in our Histories, that it seems surprizing our *Shakespear* should have taken no more Fire at it; especially when we find from how much less a Spark of Contention in his first Act of *Harry* the fourth, he has thrown his *Hotspur* into a more naturally fomented Rage, than ever ancient or modern Author has come up to, and has maintain'd that Character throughout the Play with the same inimitable Spirit. How then shall we account for his being so cold upon a
so

D E D I C A T I O N.

so much higher Provocation? Shall we suppose, that in those Days, almost in the Infancy of the Reformation, when *Shakespeare* wrote, when the Influence of the Papal Power had a stronger Party left, than we have reason to believe is now subsisting among us; that this, I say, might make him cautious of offending? Or shall we go so far for an Excuse, as to conclude that *Shakespeare* was himself a Catholick? This some Criticks have imagin'd to be true, from the solemn Description of Purgatory given us by his Ghost in *Hamlet*; yet here, I doubt, the Conjecture is too strong; that Description being rather to be consider'd simply as a poetical Beauty, and critically proper to a Catholick Character, than offer'd as a real Point or Declaration of his own Faith. Had *Shakespeare* been a *Romanist*, he would scarce have let his King *John* have taken the following Liberty with his Holiness, where he contemns the Credulity of *Philip* the *French* King that can submit to —

*Purchase corrupted Pardon of a Man,
Who, in that Sale, sells Pardon from himself.*

This

D E D I C A T I O N.

This is too sharp a Truth to be suppos'd could come from the Pen of a *Roman-Catholick*. If then he was under no Restraint from his Religion, it will require a nicer Criticism than I am master of to excuse his being so cold upon so warm an Occasion.

It was this Coldness then, my Lord, that first incited me to inspirit his King *John* with a Resentment that justly might become an *English* Monarch, and to paint the intoxicated Tyranny of *Rome* in its proper Colours. And so far, at least, my Labour has succeeded, that the additional Sentiments which King *John* throws out upon so flagrant a Provocation, were receiv'd with those honest cordial Applauses, which *English* Auditors I foresaw would be naturally warm'd to. My Success in this Point, which I had chiefly at heart, makes me almost unconcern'd for what may be judged of the farther Mechanism of the Play: I have endeavour'd to make it more like a Play than what I found it in *Shakespeare*, and if your Lordship should find it so, my Ambition has no farther Views.

Your

D E D I C A T I O N.

Your Taste in Poetry, my Lord, tho' naturally candid, wants not the quickest Eye to Imperfections ; and tho' no Man's playful Muse has more Beauties than Your own, yet is not Your Fondness for them so strong as to be cool in Your Praises, when another makes a Flight that comes near you. A poetical Rival (if he could be found) might excite you to excel, but never enough disturb You to dispraise him. This being Your natural Disposition, from whom could I hope for equal Justice or Favour ?

I now, my Lord, take my leave without the labour'd Compliments of a modern Dedicator. Your many great Qualities are too well known to the World to want a poetical Herald to proclaim them. It is to the private Man of Quality then I only make this Address : and 'tis an uncommon Pleasure to one of my advanced Age to have been thrown into a Habitude, that so frequently has permitted me to have an occasional Share in the Delight of Your unbending Hours. But since Your lately acquired Honours, which are honour'd by
Your

D E D I C A T I O N.

Your wearing them, have lifted You so far above the reach of my former Approaches, all I can at this distance aspire to, is to throw my cordial Wishes after You. May Your elevated Station never lead You beyond the Bounds of rational Happiness! That when You think fit to resign it, You may return to the private World, as You left it, the most agreeable Gentleman that ever brought Gladness into sensible Society. I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most oblig'd,

and obedient humble Servant,

Feb. 25, 1744-5.

COLLEY CIBBER.



P R O L O G U E.

Spoke by the A U T H O R.

THE hardy Wretch, that gives the Stage a Play,
Sails, in a Cockboat, on a tumbling Sea !
Shakespear, whose Works no Play-wright could excel,
Has lanch'd us Fleets of Plays, and built them well :
Strength, Beauty, Greatness were his constant Care ;
And all his Tragedies were Men of War !
Such tow'ring Barks the Rage of Seas defy'd,
The Storms of Criticks, adverse Winds, or Tide !
Yet Fame, nor Favour ever deign'd to say,
King John was station'd as a first rate Play ;
Though strong and sound the Hulk, yet ev'ry Part
Reach'd not the Merit of his usual Art !
To cure what seem'd amiss—a Modern Muse,
Warm'd by the Subject, lets his Rashness loose ;
Takes on himself the Errors of to Day,
And, thus refitted, trusts it to the Sea !
The Purpose of his Voyage this—to shew,
How England groan'd—five hundred Years ago !
When, veil'd with Sanctity, the Papal Sway
To wolfish Pastors made our Folds a Prey !
When Roman Prelates here, like Princes reign'd,
Yet scarce e'er visited the Land they drain'd !
And while the Bigots Neck this Yoke endures,
Our Souls were sav'd by foreign Sine-cures !
Thus while each Pontiff, like the Sun, from hence
Exhal'd the Vapours—of his Peter-pence ;
Their lock'd-up Heav'n they promis'd (such the Grace is !)
That Popes, like Box-keepers, secur'd you Places :

But

P R O L O G U E.

*But not as here, their Laws more firm were made,
None were admitted there, before they paid.
As if the Right divine of Roman Pow'r,
Were first to blind their Flocks, and then devour!
This carnal Discipline the f'ry John,
Determin'd to suppress, asserts his Throne!
Defiance to the lordly Pontiff flings,
And spurns his Legates that would cope with Kings!
Hence! roar'd the holy Thunder through the Land!
Agast! the People hear the dread Command!
Terror, Confusion, Rage and civil War,
At once the Bowels of the Nation tear;
'Till the lost Monarch vanquish'd and alone,
His Subjects to regain resigns his Throne;
With vassal Homage at her Feet lays down,
To hold, from Rome, his Tributary-Crown!
These dire Disasters, this religious Rage,
That shames our Annals, may become the Stage:
Where the wild Passions, which these Contests raise,
If well presented, may deserve your Praise;
At least this Pleasure from the View may flow,
That long! long distant were those Scenes of Woe!
And as such Chains no more these Realms annoy,
Applaud the Liberty you now enjoy.*



D R A-



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

KING JOHN.	Mr. Quin.
Arthur, <i>his Nephew, Duke of Bretagne.</i>	Miss F. Cibber.
Salisbury.	Mr. Ridout.
Pembroke.	Mr. Rosco.
Arundel.	Mr. Anderson.
Falconbridge.	Mr. Ryan.
Hubert.	Mr. Bridgewater.

King Philip	} of France	Mr. Hale.
Lewis <i>the Dauphin</i>		Mr. Cibber, Jun.
Melun, <i>a Nobleman</i>		Mr. Casbell.
Pandulph, <i>Legate from Pope Innocent.</i>		Mr. Cibber, Sen.
Abbot	} of Algiers.	Mr. Gibson.
Governor		Mr. Carr.

W O M E N.

Lady Constance, <i>Mother to Arthur.</i>	Mrs. Pritchard.
Blanch, <i>Neice to King John, and</i>	} Mrs. Bellamy.
<i>Daughter to Alphonso, King of</i>	
Castile.	

The S C E N E, three Acts in France, the two last in England.

P A P A L



PAPAL TYRANNY

In the REIGN of

KING JOHN.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A CAMP near ANGIERS.

*Enter King Philip, the Dauphin, Arthur, with Lady
Constance attended.*

King PHILIP.



OW, Royal *Arthur*, injur'd Heir of *England*!
Behold yon formidable Swarm of War;
That shines, in plum'd Array, to vindicate
Thy Cause, and give Rebuke to Usurpation.
O! never, never to their native Homes,

Dispers'd in Peace, shall those brave Bands return,
Till this bold Town of *Angiers* stile thee Sov'reign,
Till conquer'd *Normandy* prepare thy way,
And *England* to thy royal Right recal thee.

Arth. O! God-like *Philip*! now my more than Father!
That I have Life, was Nature's Gift; from you
A greater, nobler Blessing I receive!
That Life, with princely Dignity supported!
But, if hereafter gracious Heav'n ordain,
Your Arms shall seat me on fair *England's* Throne,
Then shall my Thanks be worthy your Acceptance;
An annual Tribute shall confess the Tenure.

B

K. Philip.

K. *Philip*. Alas! thy youthful heart melts to Concessions,
Which, though 'twere laudable in thee to form,
Becomes not elder Honour to receive.

Const. Then, *Philip*, give a riper Parent leave to speak,
A widow'd Mother, and an injur'd Princess:
For this Relief, this God-like Aid of Arms,
Receive a Tribute Heav'n it self accepts;
These Tears of Joy, that stream to *Philip's* Praise,
And Tears, that flow from high-born Hearts oblig'd,
Are Bribes, which the most glorious Kings may take.

K. *Phil*. Fair, hapless Relict of renown'd *Plantagenet*!
Compose thy Heart, and rest thy Cares with us;
Thy Wrongs are ours, and as our own will we,
Resent them: for thy Infant Son, our Son
The *Dauphin*, shall assist his Youth! at once
His Guard, and his Example in the Field;
And teach him, as in sport, the Arts of War!
Embrace him, Boy, and plant him in thy Bosom! [him!

Dauph. Thus with a Brother's Love my Breast receives

Arth. So sweet a Master, Sir, will make me learn
The hardest Task of Danger with Delight.

Dauph. Young Prince, if you advance as fast in War,
As you are forward in your School of Honour,
I sooner shall be found your Pupil than your Tutor.

K. *Phil*. Here, break we off the Greetings of our Love.
For see! where brave *Melun* from *England* comes!
From his Advices must we form our Measures.

Enter Melun.

Now, say *Melun*, to the Demands of *France*,
Is Peace, or is Defiance *England's* Answer?

Melun. In full Discharge of our Commission, Sir,
In Royal *Philip's* Name and *Arthur's* Right,
Roundly we warn'd him to resign, in Peace,
Fair *England's* Crown with all its just Dominions:
That Crown, which Faction, favour'd by Success,
From lineal Blood had forcibly withheld;
To this King *John*, after some pause of Scorn,
Reply'd, what follows, on this Claim refus'd?
War! we rejoin'd the just Control of War!

To chace Rebellion from the Realms of Right,
And bind Allegiance to its lawful Lord.

On this he kindled to such fiery Mood,
As might have well become a better Cause!

“ Bear my Defiance to your Master’s Teeth,

“ He cry’d! The War’s begun! nor are you here

“ In Safety. Hence make all your speed to *Philip*,

“ Left our loud Trumpet’s March should reach his Ear

“ Before you.—— [Drums

K. Philip.—Trumpets to Trumpets then, and Drums to
Reply, while blazing War, through Fields and Forts,
Shall sweep her Train of Desolation!

Melun. Turn then your Forces from this paltry Siege,
And form them to confront a mightier Foe!

For know, King *John* is landed on our Coast,

K. Philip. Say’st thou, *Melun*!

Melun. ——My Liege, too true it is :

I saw him disembark’d, and in review

Adjudg’d his Bodies thrice ten thousand strong.

K. Philip. Present them in their best Advantage! what!
Well chosen? Veterans, or undisciplin’d?

Melun. I dare not, Sir, deceive you by a Feint,
Or false Dispraise of what my Eyes were witness:

An Army more compleat, more martially

Prepar’d, yet never trod this northern Herbage!

Their eager March comes onward straight to *Angiers*;

All flusht and confident, in Strength and Spirit;

Not form’d of Mercenaries, Hinds compell’d,

But Volunteers, that sport with War, that come

Like crested Champions to a Tournament;

Jocund as Huntsmen at their Sun-rise Meeting,

Or playful Shepherds piping o’er the Lawns,

That having tir’d the Course of idle Pleasures,

Now turn bright Honour into Modes more noble!

With these along a Troop of Beauties pass,

Who form the Court of Lady *Blanch* of *Spain*;

And those by martial Lovers are surrounded,

All plum’d and gorgeous, wanton Sons of Fame,

Who having fell’d their Grandfires Oaks at Home,

Carry whole mortgag’d Manors on their Backs,

To make a Venture of new Fortunes here :
 In brief, a braver Choice of dauntless Spirits
 Than *English* Bottoms, now have wafted o'er,
 Did never float upon the swelling Tide,
 To violate the maiden Peace of *Europe* !

K. *Philip*. So swift an Expedition is amazing!
 But thou describ'st a Rout of Revellers!
 Men that would rather bravely feast than fight——
 But be it as it may : we'll find them Entertainment.

Dauph. Hark ! from yon distant northern Hill I hear
 The murmuring Drum give signal to the March.

[*One whispers* Melun.]

Melun. My Liege, a Pursuivant at Arms assures us,
 King *John* is now in View, and would have Parley.

K. *Philip*. Be our Reply—Content and royal Welcome.
 Now, Madam, shall you prove our Friendship ?

Const. In that alas ! tho' confident my Hope,
 Yet, Sir, permit me to retire ; the Sight
 Of Royal Treatment, paid my mortal Foe,
 Is more than my afflicted Heart can bear. [*Stance*]

K. *Philip*. Prince *Dauphin*, you conduct the Lady *Con-*
 To our Pavilion : *Arthur* may assist us.

[*Exeunt* *Dauph.* and *Constance*.]

But see ! he comes ! and with a martial Port,
 As well befits the Front of Majesty.

Enter King *John* attended.

K. *John*. Forms are the Trappings of deputed Pow'r ;
 The Speech of Kings should, like the Voice of Heaven,
 Be plain : Equality destroys Degree,
 And servile Bendings mark inferior Men :
 Thus, by our Treaties personal, we wave
 Those outside, thin Disguises of the Heart,
 And shew, at once, the naked Terms of Honour.

K. *Philip*. Such be our Parley ; brief and artless.

K. *John*. Thus then—If *France* shall peaceably permit,
 That *England* take possession of her own,
 Our *Norman* Towns, and chiefly this of *Angiers* ;
 Then come we, as a Friend, to *France* in Peace ;

If

If not, bleed *France*, and frighted Peace ascend,
To Heaven —

K. *Philip*. — Defiance to Defiance first!
Then thus to thy Demand: Those *Norman* Towns
Thou speak'st of, *France* in *England's* Right has seiz'd.

K. *John*. In *England's* Right? a Seizure made by *France*!
Hast thou, from *England*, ought to authorize
This busy meddling in thy Neighbour's Suit?
Officious in a Cause concerns thee not;
Whence is thy Motive to a Part so gracious?
Say, from what Law, what Treaties, or Pretence?

K. *Philip*. Must we produce our Voucher then? Behold
it here! [Taking Arthur by the Hand.
Read in this Face thy elder Brother's Feature!
These Eyes, this Aspect molded out of his!
In this fair copy'd Volume is contain'd
The growing Abstract of thy Brother's Virtues!
As *Geoffry* stood, in lineal Rank, direct
Presumptive Heir to *Cæurdalion's* Crown;
So stands his Son, to thwart thy crooked Claim:
Then, in the Name of high-offended Heav'n,
How comes it that Earl *John* is call'd a King,
When living Blood is beating, in these Veins
Of elder Right, to wear the Crown before thee?

K. *John*. And whence hast thou this high Commission,
To judge the Right of Crowns and summon Kings,
Like Criminals impeach'd to thy Tribunal?

K. *Philip*. From that eternal Judge, who rules on high,
Whose righteous Deputies, on Earth, are Kings!
From him have I receiv'd Authority,
To look into the Blots and Stains of Right:
That Judge appoints me Guardian to this Infant;
By his Commission is thy Claim before me,
And I am bound by Office to reject it. [Right,

K. *John*. Presumptuous Man! talk'st thou of injur'd
Who would'st thy self usurp the Pow'r of Heav'n?
And, like fantastick *Rome*, dispose of Empires?
But since that lordly Pontiff has been gracious,
Since his Indulgence deigns to stile me King;
Must *John* have *Philip's* Sanction to his Title?

K. *Philip*. What Crime alledg'd has set aside young
Can Treason, Lunacy, or tainted Blood, [Arthur?
Be once pretended in this Youth's Disfavour?

K. *John*. Prevaricating Claim is *Cœurdelion's* Will,
That gave his Crown to us, of no Validity?
Are we not there his Successor approv'd?
Adopted? by the general States confirm'd?
And is a Nation's Act responsible to thee?
Did not our *Norman William* claim by Conquest?
And, by his Will, a younger Son succeeded?
Our second *William*, nay our first *Henry* too;
Both to their elder Brother *Robert's* Claim preferr'd?
Wants then our Right a Precedent, or whence
Had *Cœurdelion* less a Pow'r to make one? [mockery;

K. *Philip*. Where Kingdoms are bequeath'd such Wills are
But this meer impious Fraud! thy spleeny Mother's Project,
Who, to secure Succession of her Power,
Seduc'd thy Brother to prefer her Minion,
That, under thee, the Creature of her Pride,
Her Passions still might lord it o'er a People! [Hence?

K. *John*. No more! thy Insults tempt my Patience!
Forth to the field! dispute our Title there!
While grappling War, the Eloquence of Kings,
Shall prove the Victor has his Right from Heav'n!

K. *Philip*. Then Heav'n for us! and *Angiers* be the Um-
Sound our immediate Summons to this Town! [pire!
A Trumpet ho! for *Arthur*! *France* demands it.

[Trumpet sounds on the French side.

K. *John*. Now sound on our Side! blow an *English* Blast!
And let them see their King that will defend them!

[Trumpet on the Part of England.

Enter Governor and Soldiers on the Ramparts.

Gov. Whence, and from whom, these Trumpets at our
Walls! [Right,

K. *Philip*. The one from *France*, who here in *England's*
Demands Possession of your Citadel.

K. *John*. *England* for *England* speaks, defying *France*!
And here, in Person, stands with *English* Pow'rs
To enter and defend your Walls from Violence!

K. *Philip*.

K. Philip. Right had no need to bring along such Pow'rs.

Gov. Whence, then, this other Army at our Gates?

K. Philip. Are you not Subjects all to *Cæurdalion's* Heir?

Gov. To his Successor, doubtless, are we subject:

But, if in Terms confus'd of Heir and King,

You now command, now interdict Obedience,

Where shall Obedience find her Safety? —

K. John. ——— Here!

Be not deluded, warlike Hearts of *Angiers*!

This Pow'r of *France*, that claims in *Arthur's* Right,

Like the fierce Falcon, clad in Turtle-plumes,

Would tempt you, from your Dove-coat Safety forth;

Then gorge Ambition with your Liberties.

Gov. How answers *France* this Allegation?

K. Philip. Behold this royal Youth, your lawful Lord:

In whose just Cause offensive War, constrain'd

By hospitable Zeal and royal Honour,

Now drags her cumbrous Engines to your Walls!

Be therefore early warn'd; for if you still

Dare set at nought the Terror of our Arms,

'Tis not this Girdle of your mould'ring Ramparts

Shall hide your rebel Heads from Chastisement!

Say then, will you set wide your Gates in Peace,

Or must we stalk in Blood to our Possession?

K. John. When *England* shall have spoke, determine:

Whence are yon murderous Ensigns, for a Siege,

And merciless Proceeding now before you?

Has not the Hunger of these *Frenchmen* brought them,

These meagre Wolves, that prowl in Troops by Night,

Taking th' Advantage of your Owners Absence,

To leap your Fence, and fill your Folds with Slaughter.

Now! at their Peril, let them stir! cry but Halloo!

And I have here a set of *English* Mastiffs

Shall worry 'em, like Currs, that bark at what

They fear — Now, know your Safety and your King,

Open your Gates, and give your Friends Refreshment.

Gov. Princes, with Patience have we heard your Contest;

Which, in the balance of our Judgment, weighs but this.

France came, in *Arthur's* Right, to seize this Town;

And *England*, by a speedy March, prevents it.

Yet both alike have sumnnon'd us as Vassals ;
 So that to either yielding, we to one are Rebels :
 Therefore, on Hazards, will we yield to neither !
 Let in yon Field your Troops decide the King,
 Then to our King, as Subjects, will we bow :
 But, till your Swords or Treaties fix that Right,
 Our stubborn Gates are barr'd against the World.

K. *John*. *Philip*, to thee we owe this Disobedience !

K. *Philip*. Here, in the Field of *Angiers*, let Obedience
 Her Lord, and *English* Liege-men bow to *Arthur* ! [know

K. *John*. This, at the gates of *Paris*, shall thou answer !

K. *Philip*. Answer thy self, thy Crime of injur'd Right,
 Thy self a Subject to the Crown thou wear'st !

K. *John*. O ! thou hast rouz'd the Lion in my Heart,
 And all my Brother's Spirit burns to chase thee !
 Take to thy Arms ! —

K. *Philip*. — Mount, Chevaliers ! to horse !

K. *John*. To Prayers ! for Pardon to those Souls of *France*,
 Whole unrepented Sins this Night shall come,
 Through *England*'s Vengeance, to eternal Doom.

[*Exeunt French and English severally. Trumpets sound
 on each side to horse.*]

Constance enters, from the Tent of Philip.

Now hangs the Crown of *England* on a Moment !
 Decisive War anon demands it fix'd
 Upon the Brow of Right, or Usurpation !
 How desp'rate, how tremendous is the Stake,
 Depending on this instant Cast of Battle !
 The Victor, the Defeated — Slave or Monarch !
 The regal Sceptre, and the purple Robe
 Against the cockled Pilgrim's Rug and Staff !
 A Prince in Glory, or a high-born Beggar !
 O ! miserable, wide Distinction, hark !

[*Alarms and at great Distance.*]

The wafting Winds, in audible Perception,
 Set all the Terrors of the Field before me !
 This Jar of Drums ! the lofty Trumpets Ardour !
 The vaunting Echoes of the neighing Steed !

This

This Clang of Armour! these sky-rending Shouts
 Of charging Squadrons speak the Battle raging!
 Yet, from the wild Confusion, no kind Sound
 Distinguishes where Victory inclines;
 These sharp Vicissitudes of Hopes and Fears,
 Tear me with Torture insupportable!
 Conquest suspended is Captivity!
 O dreadful, agonizing Interval! —
 Hear, Heav'n, my Pray'r! if thy dread Will decrees,
 Our House must fall, let not my riper Sins
 On hapless *Arthur's* Head be visited!
 O! spare, protect his youthful Innocence!
 That Life prolong'd may propagate his Virtues!
 This sudden Silence, in the vacant Air,
 Seems as if breathless Conquest sought Repose:
 Now is our Cause successful, or abandon'd!
 Hark! a Retreat is sounded! O! for News,
 To quell this Conflict of Uncertainty!
 But see! where One 'fore-spent with Toil and Haste,
 This way conducts a Youth in Form, my *Arthur*!
 My Pray'rs are heard! 'tis he himself preserv'd,
 And living, from the Battle! — O my Life!

Enter Melun with Arthur.

O! welcome! to thy Mother's painful Longings!
 To fold thee thus! is more Content than Empire!
 Crowns are not worth the anxious Coils they cost us!
 O say, my Boy! how could thy tender Limbs
 Support the Onsets of this dreadful Day?

Arth. O 'twas a gallant Horse I rode! train'd up
 To War! had I known Fear he would have sham'd me!
 He curl'd his Crest, and proudly paw'd the Ground,
 And from his vocal Nostrils neigh'd such Fire!
 To mount him seem'd the Transport of a Throne!

Const. My little Soldier! how thy Spirit charms me!

Arth. But still my Life to this brave Lord we owe:
 For when a huge broad Falchion at my Head
 Was rais'd, he threw his Body in between,
 Warded the Blow, and clove th' Assailant down!

And

And then — our Horses trampled him to Death!

Const. Words are too poor, to give such Deeds their Due;
But say, my Lord, what have our Arms decided?

Melun. Never was Field with greater Bravery fought;
Never did *Frenchmen* better bear their Spirits,
Nor *English* Courage more approve their Pasture!
While War, like Justice, weigh'd out Life for Life,
Pale Conquest hover'd in the Air amaz'd,
Nor knew on whom to drop her Chaplet down;
Whether to grace the Brow of *France* or *England*:
And though their fainting Spirits equally
Desist, unable to renew the Charge;
Yet each dispute what neither has deserv'd,
Nor Triumph, nor Defeat; nor Chains, nor Victory.

Const. What Miseries are mine, that neither War
Decides, nor long Endurance can assuage?

Melun. Have better Hopes, for as I left the Field,
A Trumpet from the Town of *Angiers* came,
To ask an Interview for Terms of Peace. [mit,

Const. Said'st thou of Peace! what Peace can *France* ad-
But on the lost, the ruin'd Rights of *Arthur*?
O yet return, and bring me better News!
Back to this fatal Interview, while I
Pensive retire, and sigh my Grievs to Heav'n!

Melun. Madam, these peaceful Pow'rs are now at hand.
Your Presence may perhaps assist your Cause,
Which private Sorrow would but ill defend.

Const. You counsel well; nor will I tamely lose 'it!

Enter King John, leading Lady Blanch, Falconbridge, &c.
attended. Trumpets.

K. John. Now, fairest *Blanch*, thy Terrors, from the Field,
Shall cease, and frowning War no more dismay thee;
This happy Interview shall heal our Wounds;
Thy smiling Hours henceforth be lost in Pleasure;
To rude Alarms succeed the midnight Revel,
And thou, as Queen, in *Normandy* shall reign.

Blanch. Alas! what Happiness might Kings enjoy,
Could Honour mark the Bounds of their Ambition!

K. John.

K. *John*. Be Honour, then, our Umpire — *France* approaches.

Enter on the opposite Side King Philip and Dauphin attended.

After them, from the Gates of Angiers, enter the Abbot, with Priests and Citizens.

K. *Philip*. Now restless *England!* are thy Troops content,
Or would they more of us? —

K. *John*. — Would *France* have more?
Have not these men of *Angiers*, from their Walls,
Stood Witness of the Havock we have made?

K. *Philip*. Or have they not, with equal eyes, beheld
The Swords of *France* stain'd in the Blood of *England*?

Abbot. Princes, with equal Sorrow have we seen
The fatal Waste of your contending Powers:
Since then your Loss is mutual in the Field,
Let in the Cabinet your Counsels conquer.

Kings most are Kings, where Peace protects the Subject.

K. *Philip*. Less of your Morals, and of Purpose more.

Abbot. As *Angiers*, then, can but one Lord obey,
Let to the other one resign that Title,
Contented with a due Equivalent,
Which to your royal Option we shall name;
Then, on such Compact, shall our wide-thrown gates
Fly from their Hinges to receive their Master.
But if in hostile Enmity's persisting —

K. *Philip*. Dar'st thou again defy us? Hence —

K. *John*. — Speak on!

Abbot. Glory, though deaf to dying Groans in War,
May lend a pitying Ear to Peace unsoil'd.

Const. Kings, by your Leave! and ere this Raven's Voice
Presume, again, to croak his bold Rebellion;
Hear once a Woman's nobler Sense of Glory!
If my free Speech on either Part sound partial,
Then both to my abandon'd Fortunes leave me.
How dare these Vassals, lying at your Mercy,
Audaciously set Bounds to royal Right;
And Traitors, as they are, give Laws to Monarchs!
If you are Kings, resent this Insolence!

Nor

Nor let them, in one Day, twice defy you :
 Both play your Engines on their crumbling Walls,
 Till an unhous'd and fenceless Desolation
 Sweep them as level, as the Seas becalm'd :
 Then to your separate Banners each return,
 And Front to Front decide the Right of Empire !
 Thus your coy Mistress Fortune, charm'd by Conquest,
 Shall from the dreadful Battle chuse her Minion,
 And kiss him with a glorious Victory ! [Heads !

K. *Philip*. Now, by yon Sky, that hangs above our
 'Tis nobly thought : These Insolents deserve
 This Chastisement : Say, then, will *England* join
 To vindicate the Cause of regal Honour,
 And bury *Angiers* in immediate Ruin ? [Charge !

K. *John*. Well hast thou offer'd *France* ! Each to his
 Which Front lies fairest to our *English* Vengeance ? [South

K. *Philip*. If *England* so approve, *France* from the
 Shall thunder —

K. *John*. — *England* from the North shall echo !

Abbot. O ! hear us ! hear, you royal Potentates !
 Stop this impatient Rigour of your Arms,
 And God-like hearken to the Cries of Peace !
 Be Heav'n's Vicegerents, and protect your Subjects !
 Let us but know our King, and we obey him ;
 Then name his Foe, and we oppose him ;
 But let not this Resource of Female Spleen
 Mislead you to an Act of Cruelty !
 She, like the childless Mother fam'd in Story,
 Yielding the Infant to be carv'd and mangled,
 Betrays the Secret of her spurious Claim.

K. *John*. 'Tis true ! the Inference yet asks Attention.

Const. How wild are the Expedients of Despair !
 But who, in Injuries like mine, is temp'rate ?
 Rather let *Angiers* know a lawless Lord,
 Than to the Rightful be their Lives a Sacrifice. } *Apart.*
 Princes, I wave my Plea, and now to *France* appeal ;
 In whose firm Honour is my only Hope.

K. *Philip*. Madam, you there with Safety may repose it.

Const. What Heav'n wills be done ; but I fear the Issue !
 These royal Parleys bode no good to me.

Hence

Hence to some holy Cell, I will retire,
 And meditate, resign'd, the Ills that wait me.
 Thus, while these Eagles hover in the Air,
 The trembling Turtle, with her only Young,
 Shrinks in her Nest, and dreads impending Wrong.

[*Exit Constance with Arthur.*]

K. *John.* Lord *Abbot*, now proceed: we pause to hear thee.

Abbot. Then, briefly, for the gen'ral Welfare, thus.
 Among the Wonders of your princely Trains,
 Your Pardon, if I see a royal Pair,
 In Birth, in blooming Age, in Virtues equal,
 (O! be the Sight prophetick to our Hopes)
 The lovely *Blanch* is near in Blood to *England*,
Lewis, the royal *Dauphin*, Heir to *France*.
 If courtly Love in search of Beauty goes,
 Where could he find it fairer than in *Blanch*?
 If virtuous Love in search of Virtue goes,
 Where shall he find it purer than in *Blanch*?
 If proud Ambition seeks a Bride of Birth,
 What purple Fountain runs through nobler Veins?
 Who then to such transcendent Maiden Charms
 Can lay a Claim superior to this *Dauphin*?
 What Youth can equal him, what Virgin her?
 Yet, as they are, are each but half themselves:
 O! two such fair divided Excellencies,
 Join'd in one Love, might heal, with happier Peace,
 The Wounds of War, and make up full Perfection!

Dauph. Had I a Hermit's Blood, a Cause so pleaded,
 A Virgin so adorn'd, with holy Praise,
 Had fir'd my Heart, and preach'd it into Love. [*Peace!*]

Abbot. Turn then, great Pow'rs, your hostile Rage to
 Bind up your Feuds in these soft Bonds of Union;
 And, like indulgent Heav'n, from lowring Clouds,
 Pour down your Blessings on your joyful People!

Dauph. My royal Father, take this holy Counsel;
 Give Peace to *England*, and Repose to me!
 For never will my Heart know Rest, 'till there

A passive Smile permits me to complain. [*England.*]

K. *Philip.* Those Smiles, my Son, are in the Gift of
Dauph.

Dauph. Thus then to *England* for the general Weal,
 Suppliant I bend my Knee, and beg for Peace :
 This Knee, which never could to Int'rest bow,
 Compell'd by Love, may bend with Honour.

K. John. Spoke, like a royal Woer, and if *France*
 Approve this Sally of thy youthful Heart,
 As she in Beauty, Education, Blood,
 Holds Hands with any Princess of the World,
 Her Dowry shall weigh equal with the proudest.

K. Philip. Let *England* ratify his Word, and *France*
 With royal Sanction shall confirm this Treaty.

K. John. Far, as our Pow'r may warrant the Consent
 Of Virgin Modesty, which Love must conquer,
 We here approve this holy Father's Counsel;
 And, for the Dowry of this high-born Maid,
 Yield we the Provinces of *Anjou*, *Main*,
Eureux, and all those Towns, that to the Sea,
 From hence, by due Inheritance we claim :
 With thrice ten thousand Marks of *English* Gold
 To grace her bridal Bed, and seal this Peace.

K. Philip. A royal Dowry, consonant to Honour,
 And be the Virgin free, our Love accepts it :
 Now *England* —

Dauph. — Pardon, royal Sir, my Transport !
 For now, methinks, what farther might be said,
 Seems due to Beauty from the Lover's Tongue.
 O! beauteous Maid! vouchsafe a patient Ear!
 If as a Prince I sue, short is my Plea :
 These royal Advocates have strongly urg'd it :
 If, as a Lover, how shall I approach thee?
 How in one Moment can I ask for Hope,
 Or how shall Nations wait till I deserve thee?
 O! that thy Form had sprung from humble Race :
 That, then, I might have given my panting Heart
 Th' Advantage of Degree, and ev'n on Sight possess'd thee.

Blanch. Prince, to my Birth you all Advantage owe ;
 Were I, like private Virgins, free to love,
 Then Modesty our Sex's Guard and Grace,
 With Coldness had receiv'd your tenderest Vows,
 And for your Sighs, the wafting Winds had caught them :

But

But Princes, born to Passions not their own,
 Are Slaves in Love, where happier Subjects reign :
 The Hearts of royal Maids, like publick Treasure,
 Are to the Exigents of State assign'd,
 While private Comfort is referr'd to Virtue.
 Of this had I been train'd in Ignorance,
 Then yielding thus my Hand had dy'd these Cheeks
 With Shame ; but conscious what I owe the Publick,
 With the same joyful Pride I seal this Peace,
 As counter-signing Ministers attest it.

Dauph. From Heaven this Joy descends.

K. John. *England and France are one.*

*King John and King Philip embrace, then join the Hands
 of Blanch and Dauphin.*

Blanch. Love must from Love——

Dauph. ——Love shall of Love be born.

K. Philip. Your Office, holy Father, shall we next
 Intreat, for at *St. Mary's* Altar straight
 This royal Marriage will we solemnize.
 You, Lord *Melun*, to Lady *Constance* haste,
 With whom this Peace, alas ! will sort but ill ;
 Bid her have Cheer, and tempt her to this Festival.

K. John. You, Cousin, on the Part of *England* greet her.
 [*To Falcon.*

Tell her these Times shall cure her sickly Fortunes ;
 All shall be heal'd : *Arthur*, her Infant Son,
 In Honour to this Peace shall shine in Dignities :
 This Day we Duke of *Bretagne* will salute him,
 Of *Richmond* Earl, say such our Word creates him.
 Now to our Solemnity——

Dauph. ——Now lovely *Blanch* !

Never had *Angiers* such a welcome Guest ;
 Thus when, of old, the Dove was sent t' explore
 The long-wish'd Blessings of a rising Shore ;
 At length a distant springing Grove she spies,
 Crops the first Branch, a sure credential Prize ;
 Then to the happy Ark resumes her Wings,
 And to the World preserv'd the peaceful Olive brings.
 [*They all enter the Town with Trumpets sounding,
 Acclamations, &c.*



A C T II. S C E N E I.

Enter Constance, Arthur, Melun, Falconbridge.

C O N S T A N C E.

A P E A C E with *England*, and by *France* concluded !
Affianc'd too ! *Blanch* to the *Dauphin* married !

And *Arthur's* Ruin made her pompous dowry !

Thou dost abuse my Ear ; it cannot be !

I have a Monarch's Oath to right my Cause,
And 'twere to wrong thy Master, to believe thee !

Mel. Madam, these Words are yours, but what before,
In plain and honest Terms, I told was true ;
'Twas his Command I should at large
Inform you of this Peace, and cheer your Hopes.

Const. My Hopes ! bid the lost Wretch with broken limbs,
Extended on the Wheel, to hope for Mercy !
Hopes I have none !——

Arth. —Since 'tis the Will of Heaven,
I do beseech you, Madam, be content.

Const. Content ! to thy vile Wrongs be patient ! no ;
Were thou, in Temper wayward, foul in Feature,
Deform'd, that ev'n thy Birth disgrac'd thy Mother !
Yet, as my Child, my Heart would feel thy Usage !
But as thou art the Pride and Triumph of my Bed,
As thou art fair, and at thy Birth, dear Boy,
Nature and Fortune both conspir'd to grace thee ;
For not the Rose or Lily, from the Hand of Nature,
Can boast their Beauties more compleat or fair !
Nor has, among the Realms of *Europe*, Fortune
Bequeath'd a Crown to Blood or Birth superior !
As such when I behold thee, and behold
Thee wrong'd, betray'd, abandon'd to the World ;
Then, then, to be content were criminal !

An

An Indolence that Virtue would disclaim ;
 No, no, my Child ! cruel, obdurate Souls,
 They only, who could do these Wrongs, might
 Bear them :

But human Hearts, a helpless Mother's Heart,
 Must yield to Nature, and deplore thy Fortune !

Fal. These plaintive Transports, Madam, cannot help,
 But may impair your State : Consider well,
 How may our potent Masters be offended,
 That thus you slight their royal Invitation ?
 Yielding to neither, you lose both your Friends ;
 We must not, Madam, dare not part without you.

Const. You must ! you dare ! you shall ! I will not go !
 Tell them, They've taught my Sorrow to be proud :
 There is a Dignity in suff'ring wrong,
 Which mean-soul'd Perfidy can never reach !
 Here, on this humble Earth, build we our Throne ;
 Here shall Calamity in Judgment sit,
 And call Oppression to her sad Tribunal.
 Now let injurious *France* and *England* see,
 How we are rais'd in Majesty above them !
 This is the Throne, to which, or first or last,
 The greatest Kings must bow — *Philip*, I thank thee ;
 These are thy Favours ! — Such the Faith of Princes !

*Enter King Philip attended, Melun and Falconbridge
 having observ'd to him the State of Constance : He, ap-
 proaching, raises her.*

K. Philip. What means the mournful *Constance* on the
 Dispel thy Griefs, and let the Honours of [Earth ?
 Thy Infant-Son now blend the gen'ral Joy.

Const. *Philip*, I fear my Presence is offensive.

K. Philip. Why should thy Fortunes warrant such a Fear ?

Const. Perhaps I fancy'd my sad Looks reproach'd thee ;
 And to the noble Mind Reproach is painful. [have you—

K. Phil. Reproach should follow Wrongs : What Cause

Const. What Cause ! This Object, *Philip*, may inform thee :
 Behold this royal Beggar — [Pointing to Arthur.

K. Philip. — Yet his Fortune

Deserves not this Complaint : His high Promotions,

New Honours, and Appointments are most noble.

Const. Shall Honour then compound? Has royal Right
A Fellowship? Is he, who loses half,
Not robb'd, because a Moiety is left him?
Is *Arthur* known the lineal Heir of *Cœur de lion*?
And shall he basely stoop to vassal Dignities?
Is *Britany*, that poor dependent Dukedom,
That Gew-gaw Feather, on his Infant Crest,
Of equal Weight for *England's* Diadem?

K. Philip. Your Griefs conclude, as if Events were ours.
Have not our Arms, in *Arthur's* royal Right,
Expos'd our Crown to Hazards in the Field?
While, in the bloody Contest, Thousands fell,
The slaughter'd Victims of our Faith to thee?

Const. And to deface that glorious Act of Honour,
Thou hast betray'd the Right of *Arthur* to his Foe.

K. Philip. Betray'd! Now judge for me! Had you been
What Answer might this Treatment have deserv'd? [*Philip*,

Const. Then *Philip* never had deserv'd this Treatment,
Had I been *Philip*; *Philip* injur'd *Constance*,
Then hadst thou seen a *Philip* firm to Virtue!
A Prince that had preferr'd the Cause of Honour
To all the temporal Int'rests on Earth!

But Pow'r, I see, howe'er adorn'd with Purple,
Shews, in the Monarch, but a worldly Man;
And Faith is but the Merchandise of Empire!

K. Philip. Temper, I see, is lost upon Impatience:
When you have worn a Crown, you'll better judge
How far a Monarch may extend his Virtue.

Const. When I have worn a Crown? Injurious Man!
Dost thou insult the Wretch thou hast undone?

Philip, farewell: And, if thou canst, enjoy
The Peace which my Calamities have bought.

If Kingdoms we on broken Vows must found,
Oh! never may thy guilty Brows be crown'd!
May'st thou, with taintless Honour, brave thy Fate;
Nor ever dare to be ignobly great!
In conscious Virtue may'st thou Empire find,
And reign the happier Monarch of thy Mind.

[*Exit with Arthur.*

K. Phil.

K. Philip. *Melun*, attend her, and observe her Passions :
 Revenge may prompt her to commute her Fortune,
 And her Submission to the Pow'r of *England*
 Might sow, between our Realms, new Seeds of Discord.
 [*Exit Melun.*]

Enter Dauphin and Blanch.

Dauph. My royal Father, our fair Dauphiness,
 Press'd by her Sex's Fear, intreats your Favour.

K. Philip. So fair, so gentle a Petitioner
 Needs but to name her Wishes, to command them.

Blanch. Not so, my Lord ; but our Desire is this :
 My royal Uncle having from *England*
 Advice, that presses his Departure hence,
 Alarms my Heart with Fears 'till now unknown :
 When he's away, and I left here a Stranger,
 Young, unexperienc'd, liable to Failures,
 How may Simplicity, tho' well inclin'd,
 Mistake the Duties of a Bride or Daughter ?
 Without his Guidance to direct my Steps,
 How may my Errors wander from your Favour ? [*cures?*]

K. Phil. How can'st thou lose what even thy Fear se-

Blanch. Let him not yet depart ; you, Sir, might stay

Dauph. Grant her Desires! ——— [*him.*]

K. Philip. ——— When fit Occasion offers,
 For his fair Neice's sake we will intreat him.
 But see! he comes! with Business on his Brow :
 Depend upon our Love, and calm thy Cares.

[*Exeunt Blanch and Dauphine.*]

Enter K. John with Letters, &c.

K. John. Brother of *France*, we grieve that our Affairs
 In *England*, on the Spur, demand our Presence ;
 But 'tis our Glory that we part in Peace.

K. Philip. What unforeseen Occasion thus breaks in
 Upon the Revels of our Amity ?

K. John. Our Letters thence inform us that our Subjects,
 Stirr'd by the restless Policy of *Rome*,
 Meet in Cabals, t'assert the Papal Pow'r :
 Faction and Tumult, in the open Day,

Stalk through the Streets with Folly at their Heels,
 And make religious Cries against Allegiance;
 Warm'd by this Spirit too, at *Canterbury*,
 The lordly Monks dispute our regal Pow'r;
 Reject our Prelate to that See prefer'd,
 And by a second Choice appeal to *Rome*:
 These growing Ills must in their Shell be crush'd,
 And by the injur'd Majesty of Kings,
 These ghostly Traitors shall abjure their Choice,
 Though at the Hazard of our Kingdom we abide it.

Enter Falconbridge.

Fal. So please your Majesty his Eminence
 Of *Milan*, *Pandulph*, the great Cardinal,
 And Legate, from the holy See full charg'd
 With apostolick Pow'rs, demands his Audience.

K. John. Pandulph! but be it so; Cousin, conduct him:
 And Sir, my Brother, tho' his holy Errand
 Reach but our self in Form, yet is his View,
 By our Example, to make others bow,
 And hold, in equal Chains, the Kings of *Europe*:
France, from this Juncture, may be early warn'd;
 Your self a Witness better will advise you.

Enter Pandulph attended.

Pand. Hail, you anointed Deputies of Heaven!
 Peace, Health and Benedictions crown your Days!
 To thee, King *John*, our high Commission speaks,
 From our most holy Father *Innocent*,
 Servant of Servants, and the Lord of Kings,
 I *Pandulph*, of fair *Milan* Cardinal,
 And Legate from the sacred Chair, demand,
 Why, against his apostolick Power,
 Thou stubbornly dost spurn, and with unhallow'd Force
 Keep *Stephen Lancton*, now of *Canterbury*
 Archbishop duly chosen, from the Lands
 Consign'd and sacred to that holy See?
 What may these rash Extremities portend?
 Why are the Waters of Religion troubled?
 What impious Counsels have seduc'd thy Love

From

From the maternal Bosom of our Church?
 Whence are these wilful Marks of Disobedience?
 Such is the Contumacy thou art charg'd with,
 And this the Time appointed thee to answer.

K. *John*. Is then Assertion of our kingly Right
 Term'd impious, stubborn, wilful, disobedient!
 This the proud Stile of *Rome* to sov'reign Princes!
 Are these the meek Examples of her Doctrine?
 I tell thee, Legate, as to *Lancton's* Right,
 One Pope's enough for *England* to endure!
 But Vice-roys there we never will receive,
 For such are all whom *Rome* appoints our Pastors!
 Created from abroad, they know no Lord at home;
 But, when their Duty's question'd, answer *Rome*!
Rome shall support them; for their King's her Vassal!
 But, Cardinal, from hence imperious *Rome*
 Shall know, in *England* we will reign!
 Nor shall, while we have Life, *Italian* Priests
 Have Tithe or Toll in our Dominions!
 No, not a native Brow shall there be mitred,
 That thinks not due Obedience to his Prince,
 Consistent with his other Christian Duties!

Pand. Are Subjects to their Prince more bound in Duty,
 Than is that Prince in Duty bound to Heav'n? [Sense?

K. *John*. Has Heav'n depriv'd all Christian Kings of
 Or have they Eyes, and yet no Right to use them?
 Shall free-born Kings not chuse their native Pastors?
 The Lands thou speakst of are the Soil of *England*;
 And who shall plant a crossier'd Tenant there,
 That owes not to our Crown his holy Tenure?

Pand. Dominion o'er the Vassals on those Lands,
 Is not deny'd thy Right; but on their Lords Demise
 The Right of Heav'n resumes the vacant Cure,
 And to that Cure, as Heav'n's Vicegerent here,
 Our holy Sire appoints the Successor!

K. *John*. Blast your evasive School-distinctions,
 That prove at once, I am and am not King!
 Suppose an Enemy invade those Lands,
 Who shall protect them? Is't not our Expence?
 Our Arms, our Subjects, that must face the Danger?

Will your Anathemas, your Fulminations,
 Drive from our Fields the Ravage of a War?
 Shall *Rome* then say, Those Lands are ours in Fee,
 And you, for our sole Uses, shall defend them!
 Insatiate Pride! by Heav'n! it mocks our Senses!
 No, Sir, our *English* Pastors shall be *English* Subjects;
 Not Aliens, independent on our Crown;
 Who call the Fleeces of their Flocks to *Rome*,
 And when their holy Avarice is curb'd,
 Then drive them at their Pleasure from Allegiance.
 But let thy Master know, we hold our Crown
 By Right, as high as he his priestly Diadem;
 And, where our Realms extend, will be our self supreme.

Pand. O! impious, O prophane, apostate Rage!
 My Christian Ears are tortur'd with the Sound!

K. Phil. Brother of *England*, this avow'd Contempt
 Of sacred Pow'r, but ill accords that Faith
 Implicit, which her royal Sons profess:
 Since you have made me party to this Audience,
 Let me in friendly Confidence assure you
France would not, trampling on the Rights of *Rome*,
 Provoke the holy Censures of her Chair,
 Though the Attempt might double our Dominions!

K. John. Though you, and all the Kings of *Chrstendom*,
 Should bow your Necks, for this proud Pope to tread on,
 Crawl to his Throne, and like a God adore him;
 Or rather fear, as *Indians* do the Devil,
 Not for the Good, but Mischief he may do you!
 Shaking your Purfes empty in his Lap,
 To purchase impious Pardon of a Man,
 Who, in that Sale, sells Pardon from himself!
 Though you and all the World like Columns stand,
 To form triumphal Arches to his Pride;
 Yet *England* shall alone himself oppose
 This subdolous, this priestly Usurpation!

Pand. Hear then, high Heav'n and Earth! ye Saints
 And Men below! Christians and Angels, hear! [above,
 Hear the tremendous Doom, our holy Church
 On this accurst, apostate Head denounces!
 Drive him, ye mighty Kings, and Potentates,

From Realm to Realm a lost abandon'd Exile!
 All Bonds of Peace, Defence, Alliance, Commerce,
 Broken! absolv'd! annul'd! O sweep him forth,
 Like the first bloody *Cain*, detestable!
 This sacrilegious Parricide! whose Arm,
 Against the sacred Bosom of our Mother,
 Has drawn the impious Sword of Disobedience!
 From this immediate Moment be his Crown
 The Spoil, the Right, the just Reward of him,
 Whose happier Hand shall rend it from his Brow!
 Be all his Subjects from Allegiance free,
 From Duty, Converse, all Benevolence,
 Support, or Correspondence interdicted!
 On Pains eternal to the Soul offending!
 And meritorious shall the meanest Soul
 Be deem'd rever'd to Ages canoniz'd,
 Who shall by Violence or Stratagem,
 For these his Crimes, deprive him of his Life!

K. *John*. Stay! thou imperious Legate! hear a King's
 Defiance echo to your holy Thunder!
 First, for your impious Arrogance of Pow'r,
 We blow it mouthing to the Winds contemn'd!
 But as its Vanity deserves Rebuke,
 We, in substantial Vengeance, will repay it
 On thy rebellious Brethrens Heads accumulated!

K. *Phil*. What may this Rashness mean? be yet advis'd!
 Nor tempt the Chastisement of holy Pow'r. [drawn!

K. *John*. Unman me not with Fear: The Sword is
Rome now shall know the Pow'r of *England*! Ho!
Cornhill and *De Cantie* you, our valiant Knights,
 Chuse like your selves a Band of Men determin'd!
 Conduct them with the utmost speed to *England*:
 There, from their Hive of *Canterbury*,
 With military Force of Fire and Sword,
 Exterminate these trait'rous Monks, that have,
 In this Election of their Prelate, dar'd
 To send the Question of our Right to *Rome*:
 Seize on their Goods, their Moveables, and Treasure!
 Confiscate to the Publick! Then proclaim it Death
 To give them Shelter through our whole Dominions!

Without Remorse, Inquiry, or Delay,
See this our Will, with rigour, be obey'd!

[*Exeunt Cornhill and De Cantic.*

Now Legate, as thou lik'st this Work, proceed!
We yet have Hecatombs of Drones, thy Victims;
For each Anathema, a Diocese!
Let Popes confine to Points of Faith their Sway,
And none shall more implicitly obey:
But when they strain that Sway to temp'ral Pow'r,
And would the inborn Rights of Kings devour;
Then, by our Arms, from Usurpation hurl'd,
We'll treat them as the Tyrants of the World! [*Exit.*

Pand. Thus then to thee, to thee! O filial *France*!
Our holy Church commits her bleeding Cause!
O! stop the homeward Passage of this Heretick!
Rouze all the Warriour in thy righteous Heart,
To stem this wild Apostate's Persecution.
Think how may sad Reproach afflict thy Soul,
When Fame shall say that *France* in Arms stood by,
And tamely saw the impious Devastation! [*ment:*

K. Philip. Alas! my Lord! *France* needs not this Incite-
We see, with Grief, this frantick Disobedience;
Feel too, with equal Pain, our arms confin'd:
For how may solemn Oaths of Amity
And Peace be broken? Such have we sworn to *England*!
Can we, through Wrongs, cut short our Way to Justice?
Do certain Evils for uncertain Good,
And offer up our Perjuries to Heav'n?

Pand. Can Faith to Man abjure our holy Duties?
What Pow'r can bind the Soul against it self?
What Oaths absolve thee from thy Vows to Heav'n?
As Heav'n has a Claim superior then,
'Tis Perjury to keep thy Oath with Hereticks!
Or if thy Conscience yet retains a Scruple,
Thus, from our heav'nly Pow'r, to bind or loose,
Thy cancell'd Oath receives its Absolution!

K. Philip. Ay, now, my Father, is my Soul at large!
Free and inspir'd! our Arms are sanctified!
To be the chosen Champion in a Cause
So heavenly just——

Pand.

Pand. ——— shall add more Glory to
Thy Sword, than Wreaths of universal Empire!

K. Philip. Melun! this Instant let our Troops be form'd!
Then at their Head will we demand of *England*,
That these his impious Orders he recal,
And yield to *Rome* the Right of his Obedience:
Which, if refus'd, then be the Signal given
For dire Control, and Chastisement of War!

Pand. Myriads of Saints, and Angels rang'd on high,
Shall clap their sacred Wings, and plaud thy Piety.

[*Exeunt.*

Trumpets. Enter Dauphin with Blanch.

Blanch. O fatal Day! are these thy Promises?
Is then that sacred Peace, which smiling Love
And hush'd Ambition hand in hand have sworn,
Like a wreck'd Vessel, in a Moment lost!
Become the Sacrifice to ruthless War!

All the dear Triumphs of my duteous Heart,
Defac'd, forbidden! sunk to Sounds of Sorrow!

Dauph. Can Sorrow have a place in Hearts like thine?
Whose Views are bounded with Regards to Glory?
The tenderest Love must yield its Dues to Honour!
Our Troops have Order for immediate March;
Hard is our parting, but inevitable!
Love yet will have his Hour.—

Blanch. ——— Is this to love,
To have our nuptial Feast serv'd in by Slaughter?
Shall braying Trumpets and loud churlish Drums
Drown the soft Melody of bridal Songs?
O! my lov'd Lord! my Husband! that dear Name!
Methinks so early on my Tongue might move thee:
Thus hanging on thy Heart, for *England's* sake,
England to me this Morn the kindest Parent!
I beg thee, lend thy Help to my Distress!
To Honour let the publick Good give Law,
And keep this sacred Peace inviolate.

Dauph. Be witness, Heav'n! how thy Sighs dissolve me!
But as thy Virtue, for the publick Weal,
Broke through thy Sex's Forms to yield thy Beauties;
So to thy Charms add one Perfection more,

And

And let thy Piety surmount thy Love ;
For now religious Ties demand our Sword.

Where Pow'r so sacred calls, even Kings obey !
War, now, but leads to love the nobler way !
Not to be foremost would my Flame reprove ;
But crown'd with Conquest, I deserve thy Love.

[Exit Dauphin.

Blanch. O France ! O England ! fatal both to me !
Would I had never left my native Soil,
To wander thus in pompous Misery !
As when the tempest-beaten Bark is fir'd
By Lightning, the despairing Passenger
Sees sure Destruction ev'ry way surround him :
So in this equally devouring War,
My sole Resource is Pray'r to Heav'n ; but how,
For what, or whom can I my Vows address !
For England ? No ! connubial Bonds forbid it !
That France may conquer ? Neither ! Ties of Blood,
Of Education, Friendship, all restrain me !
Thus, while to diff'rent Hopes my Vows are tied,
Conflicting Fears my bleeding Heart divide.

[Exit Blanch.

An A L A R M.

After which the French Forces appear retiring before the English, when a Victory has been some time sounded.

Enter King John, Falconbridge, and Soldiers.

K. John. A glorious Field ! and bravely was it fought !
O ! my Friends ! when in Triumph we return
To England through our proud Metropolis,
How will the loaded Walls and Windows swarm
With clamorous Souls, to give their Champions welcome ?
How, like a Torrent, will their Joy o'erwhelm us,
Making our March more toilsome through the Press,
Than here we found it through the Swords of France ?

Fal. This News will have its Uses, Sir, at home ;
Give honest *Englishmen* but Blood and Battle ;
They think no Subsidies too dear for Victory !

[Loss

K. John. Now forward to our Camp ! there shall our
And

And Gain be balanced ; what dear Friends are missing,
And who are Prisoners of the Enemy.

Fal. Our Loss counts little, when compar'd to theirs ;
For all the Barons of *Poitou*, I'm told,
Are taken, Sir, with *Hugh le Brun* their Leader ;
And as I cross'd the Field, the Heralds then
Had in their List two hundred captive Knights,
And Mercenaries proportionable.

K. John. This Day has made us debtor to thy Sword.
Now shall we farther use thee : Of the Barons,
Some to our *Norman* Castles shall be sent ;
Others to *England*, Cousin, shall pass o'er with thee :
Whose Ransom shall in part repay thy Service :
Our self, with all convenient Speed, will follow ;
This Night shall thy Dispatches be prepar'd,
With Pow'r at large, there to disgorge the Bags
Of dronish Monks and pamper'd hoarding Abbots.
Since *Rome* so fiercely calls our Right in question,
No Mercy will we have on her Dependents !
Use our Commission in its utmost Force.

Fal. Doubt not, my Liege, their Skins shall be as bare,
As they have shorn their Sheep, the Laity.

Enter Hubert.

K. John. Now, *Hubert*, whence thy breathless Haste ?
What farther News ?

Hub. ——— Better, I'm bold to say,
Your happier Arms could never have propos'd !

K. John. Be brief——

Hub. ——— The Head and Fountain of our Wars
Is stopt ! *Arthur* your Nephew, Sir, is taken.

K. John. *Arthur* ! May I believe thee ? How ? By whom ?

Hub. After the general Rout, upon Advice,
That in a Village, to these Woods adjacent,
Some Remnant of the Foe again were forming,
We straight march'd up, and summon'd them to yield ;
When finding thrice their Numbers we exceeded,
To our Discretion instant they surrender'd :
Among these Pris'ners, Sir, was *Arthur* found,
Whom, in your royal Tent, our Party has secur'd,

That

That there your farther Pleasure, Sir, might find him.

K. John. Remove him straight to *Roan*! there in the Castle
Close be his Guard! and, *Hubert*, for thy News
Receive this Trifle, Earnest of our Love. [A Ring:

No, *Hubert*, never will we see young *Arthur*!

In Princes Honour holds it mean, to call
Or Criminal or Captives to our Presence,
Unless to grant them Liberty or Pardon.

Hub. You would not then release him, Sir?

K. John. ——— Release him!

Not for thy Soul! keep him, as thou wouldst guard
The Pupil of thy Eye from Thorns or Briers!

Let not even the Relief of Life, unless
From thy own cautious Hand, come near him.

Hub. I take you, Sir—I'll guard him to your Wishes.

K. John. Do that, beyond thy Wishes will I love thee.

[An Officer whispers Falconbridge.

Fal. My Liege, w'are told the Lady *Blanche* is fled
In terror to *Samur*——

K. John. ——— The Chance of War!
Her Fortune, now, is in another's Care:
For look thee, *Hubert*, *France* had never found
Pretence for War, unless from *Arthur's* Claim:
And therefore had the Boy now died in Battle,
Or heretofore by Sicknes any way;
That drove Suspicion of his Death from us:
Not only these slight Wars had been abortive,
But future Times in pregnancy of Cares,
Pretensions, Doubts, Jealousies, Commotions,
Had never reach'd the hope of Life or Action.

Hub. Had I thought that—I could have ended him,
Which now, Sir, would infringe the Laws of War.

K. John. O, thou didst well, good *Hubert*, to preserve
Consider, he's of royal Blood, and therefore—— [him!

Fal. My Liege, the Governor and Magistrates
Attend to offer up the Keys of *Angiers*. [leisure;

K. John. 'Tis well, we will receive them—more at
We will convince thee, *Hubert*, of our Love;
Mean while attend thy Prisoner as instructed.

Fal. This *Hubert* seems a rising Favourite. [Aside.

K. John.

K. *John*. If Features err, not, *Hubert* is the Man : }
 'Tis true, he's slow, has not the Courtier's quickness, }
 Or half the Hints we gave had fir'd his Brain ; } *Apart.*
 T'have done the Deed, we tremble but to name ! }
 Some fitter time shall mould him to our Purpose : }
 Now Actions, open to the Day, demand us. }
 Now, Cousin, set we forward ; march to *Angiers*,
 Thence to *England* ; there, unbound and free,
 Shall full Prerogative and regal Power
 Chace from our plunder'd Realms these Wolves of *Rome*.

Fal. This Battle the fierce Cardinal fomented,
 The blund'ring Insolence of priestly Pow'r,
 That thought to cow you from your Right, with Curses
 Deluding *France*, by breach of Oaths absolv'd,
 To make a holy Cause of *Rome's* Presumption.

K. *John*. Now, where's the Force of his Anathemas ?
 Thinks he that Words can blow us from our Throne ?
 No ; to her Cost, o'er-bearing *Rome* shall find,
 Whene'er her holy Bulls presume to bellow,
 There's yet an *English* Lion that can roar.

A King that mocks the lordly *Roman* Chain ;
 And dares, to Death, the Right of Kings maintain.



A C T III. S C E N E I.

SCENE the French Court.

Pandulph alone.

Pan. **D**iscourag'd ! no ; this Battle, like a Blow,
 Upon the burning Cheek of injur'd Honour,
 Shall turn the holy Vengeance to destroy him.
 Such daring Outrage, Heresy so flagrant, [World
 Should, as a midnight Fire, wake the whole Christian
 To quench the Flame. No, never can we bear
 The Glories of our Papal Pow'r should stoop

To

To the inferior Sway of temp'ral Princes.
France bears but ill this fierce Rebuke of Fortune ;
 Therefore, in him to rouse the wonted Zeal,
 The fiery Spirit, needful to our Cause,
 Must be our Work of instant Policy.
 He comes with wringing Discontent, Reproach,
 Vexation on his Brow—it will be so!
 Passions, like sudden Floods, must run their Course,
 'Till of themselves they ebb, and straight are fordable.

Enter King Philip and Dauphin.

K Philip. Now, rash Legate, what have thy Counsels done?
 Are these thy promis'd Blessings from above?
 Now see the just Reward of broken Peace,
 Of Faith betray'd! Is not the Hand of Heav'n
 Against us? *Arthur* taken, *Angiers* lost!
 Our Arms disgrace the Talk of vulgar Tongues!
 While *John*, victorious from our bleeding Fields,
 With Spoils of *France* in Triumph sails to *England*.

Dauph. O mournful *Blanch*! how wilt thou now
 receive me? [Exit Dauphin.

Pand. Thus Heav'n, by Suff'rings, forms the great Virtue;
 Affliction bends the Soul to Piety.
 The Heart of Man, made proud by Pow'r, is apt
 To swell with Self-Opinion, to presume,
 As Fortune and Success were held his Vassals.
 Yet think not Heav'n forsakes, but by this Stroke
 Incites thee rather to pursue this Heretick;
 As Chance of War has made our Cause more desp'rate,
 So are we bound, with double Duty, to retrieve it.

K. Philip. Preach to the Seas! *France* is not now himself:
 Recal the yester Sun! make me what then
 I was, with Patience then—but not 'till then
 With Patience can I hear thee; ha! see there!
 Behold a Sorrow that exceeds our own.

Enter Constance led by her Woman.

Reproach like this, what mortal Breast can bear!
 Battles hard fought the bravest Sword may lose,
 But by our broken Faith we chuse our Shame!

O fair Distress ! well are thy Wrongs reveng'd !

Const. What is thy Loss to my Calamity ?

Thy Wounds bleed only from the Pride of Pow'r
Defeated ; mine a tender Mother feels :

Ambition never knew the Throes of Nature.

K. Philip. If Shame, Disgrace, and Ruin on thy Head,
That wrought thy Sorrows, can assuage them,
Ease then thy wounded Heart on my Disasters.

Const. Has then Affliction taught thee this Compassion ?

Constance yet never knew a Partner in

Her Woe : I came to triumph o'er thy Fate ;
But my Reproach, suppress'd by thy Contrition,
Blends with my own a Sigh to thy Misfortunes.

Pand. These social Sorrows, streaming to a Point,
But swell the Flood, and make our Purposes
Impracticable——[*Apart.*] Lady, be advis'd ;
Let not your ill-tim'd Grief dissolve the King
In this unprofitable Softness——

Could you urge ought to animate our Cause,
That to his martial Spirit might recal him,
Then better might his Sword than Sighs relieve you.

K. Philip. O never will that Day return ! Advice
Is irksome now as is a twice told Tale,
Vexing the sick Man's Ear that fain would slumber.

Const. If Kings on Earth are Substitutes of Heav'n,
Why wouldst thou warn him from its Attributes ?
O if thy Heart be human, thou must know
That Pity, though it swells our Grief, relieves it.

Pand. And yet 'twere kinder to redress than to augment it.

Const. I prithee let me grieve ! is that deny'd me ? No,
I will not be debar'd the Right of Lamentation :
O that my Wailings had the Thunder's Voice,
That I might rive the very inmost Earth,
'Till from its hollow Womb grim Death might rise
To give my Miseries their only Cure.

Pand. This more is Madness than the Voice of Sorrow.

Const. Thou art not holy to belye me so ;
I am not mad, I know my Wretchedness ;
This Breast I beat, these Hairs I rend are mine ;
My Name is *Constance*, *Arthur* is my Son,

The rightful, the imprison'd Heir of *England*.

Think me not mad, or thou wilt make me so.

K. Philip. Disturb not, give her Grievs the way.

Const. ————— O would

To Heav'n I were, that Madness might relieve me.

Preach some Philosophy to make me mad,

And I will call thee charitable Father :

For while thou seest me sensible, thou seest

Me wretched as the Sense of Woe can make me.

Pand. O fair Affliction! be thy Soul at Peace ;

I meant not to awake but hush thy Sorrows ;

Yet think that Resignation is a Duty ;

For righteous ever is the Will of Heav'n.

Const. O 'tis too true, too rashly has, I fear,

My murm'ring Heart complain'd—'tis I, 'tis I,

Constance has drawn these dire Afflictions down ;

The Life of *Arthur* was too young t' offend ;

Therefore to double Wailings am I doom'd,

That on my poor Child's Head my Sins are fallen !

Pand. Despair not, Lady, let your Patience shew,

Amidst its Wrath, your Trust is still in Heav'n.

Const. He talks to me, that never had a Son.

K. Philip. Be not more fond of Grief than of your Son.

Const. I have no Son, Grief now supplies his room,

Fills up his vacant Garments with his Form,

Lies in his Bed, walks Hand in Hand along,

Puts on his pretty Looks, repeats his Words,

Remembers me of all his gracious Parts ;

Must the dear Memory of these be lost ?

And what, but Grief, can print them in my Mind ?

Enter Melun, who presents a Packet to King Philip.

K. Philip. To us, *Melun*, from whence ?

Melun. ————— Express from *England*.

These to the Lord Cardinal are address'd ;

And the same Post brought others to the *Dauphin*.

K. Philip. What hear we of the Enemy ?

Melun. ————— King *John*

This Night, we are inform'd, sets out for *Calais* ;

Prince *Arthur*, Madam, to some frontier Castle is

Confin'd,

Confin'd, where *Hubert* has the Charge of him.

Const. Tho' Death in all its Terrors were his Guard,
Dauntless Despair from Fort to Fort shall seek him!
So when her Fawn the Hunters Toils have snar'd;
The bounding Doe forsakes the safer Herd;
Wild o'er the Fields to his vain Help she flies,
And, press'd by Fear, on pointed Javelins dies.

[Exit Constance,

Enter Dauphin with Letters.

Dauph. Now to our Cause, Sir, bring we Life reviv'd!
Howe'er proud *John* may boast his Feats in *France*,
Fortune, in *England*, will with Frowns receive him:
His murmuring Barons, ripe for a Revolt,
Recounting here at large their Grievances,
Invite our Arms to give their Cause Assistance.

K. Philip. To the same Purport our Advices speak:
Here, from the Lords of *Pembroke*, *Arundel*,
Warren, and *Salisbury*, with farther Pow'rs
Associate, and by secret Oaths assur'd,
Receive we, by their own Hands attested,
Offers of fair Advantage to our Crown.

Pand. Here the same Nobles have our holy Pow'r
Implor'd, to aid and sanctify their Arms.
Now mark! how secret are the Ways of Heaven!
That, from this Battle lost, has only mov'd
The War to surer Ground, from *France* to *England*!
O! never let Dejection droop the Head!
While thus the Arm of Providence supports thee!
That, when thy Hopes were sinking, raises them
To Conquest, Vengeance, and extended Empire! [us?

K. Phil. To *England*'s Empire, what vain Hope can raise

Pand. Not Hope, but Right, shall to thy lineal Blood
Confirm thy Claim! O! Royal *Philip*, hear me!
For now prophetick Spirit bids me speak!
Here, here before thee, stands the Heir of *England*!

Dauph. What means your Eminence? explain this
Wonder.

K. Phil. Were *John* destroy'd, yet Royal *Arthur* lives;
And while he lives, what Claim steps in before him?

Pand. Think you the Date of *Arthur*'s Days a Bar?

Is not his Life in *John* of *England's* Pow'r?
 O ! never will he count his Crown secure,
 Ne'er will his Fears know Rest, or Heart have Ease,
 Till Life lies cold within the Veins of *Arthur* !

K. Philip. Alas ! unhappy Prince ! I fear his Fate !

Pand. Grant me then *Arthur* lost, (as sure you must,
 Unless, against his Nature, *John* turn Saint)
 Then, in the Right of *Blanch* the Dauphiness,
 (*John* standing out-law'd by his Crimes to *Rome*)
 Your Blood comes lineal to the Crown of *England* !

K. Phil. Yet say that *John* intends not *Arthur's* Death ?

Pand. Is he not dead already were the Question !

Dauph. Why in so close a Prison should he guard

Pand. Unless to end him were a Cruelty [him ?

Unprofitable — or say he dies not now :

Yet when the warlike Dauphin's Trumpet fills
 The *English* Air, that Instant Sound destroys him !
 (For *John* dreams not of yours, but *Arthur's* Claim)

Thence falls the strong Impression on his Fears ! —
 And if he kills him, what can save himself ?

How shall our holy Vengeance then pursue him !
 Tempting, like Hounds, his Commons from Allegiance,
 To snarl and scramble for the Bones of Majesty !

Dauph. A People so misus'd deserve a Leader.

Pand. Methinks I see this Hurly all on Foot !
 Revolt and Rage in every Face !
 Whose Prejudice and Zeal so fierce shall flame,
 That not a common Vapour in the Air,
 Or distant Thunder in the Clouds, shall roll,
 But shall as Prodigies, and dire Portent, be deem'd
 Of destin'd Vengeance on his impious Head ! [dains it !

K. Philip. I see, I see it now ! The Will of Heav'n or-
 And warlike Preparations shall obey :

Melun, lose not an Hour ! collect your Troops,
 Recruit the broken ; be their Numbers doubled !
 Our Edicts o'er the Land once more shall drain
 The Purse of Nobles, and the Peasantry :
 And O ! Lord Cardinal —

Pand. ——— We know thy Wants !
 Nor shall the exempted Clergy here be free :

The sov'reign Pontiff, in a Cause so righteous,
 Shall suffer thee to draw from sacred Coffers,
 Though, by this Aid, their Charities were stinted !
 No, not a Mendicant, in all thy Realms,
 But shall his Mite contribute to the Cause ! [Glory !

K. *Philip*. Go then, our eldest Hope ! be thine the
 Waft thee with earliest Winds to head this War ;
 Drive from fair *Albion's* Isle this Infidel !

Affert thy Right, and mount his forfeit Throne !
 To thy sage Counsels, Father, we commend him.

Pand. Not my own Life more precious in my Care.

Dauph. Nor Life more pleasing than this glorious
 Charge ! [for ever.

K. *Philip*. Farewel, my Boy ! if thou speed'st well—
 Never was Breast in Parting so divided !
 If thou in *England* reign'st, thy Right in *France*,
 While we survive, admits not thy Return.
 Thus while thy Welfare we of Heav'n implore,
 Our highest Hope—is never to behold thee more.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

S C E N E *changes to a Chamber in the Castle of Roan.*

Enter King John with Hubert.

K. *John*. This strict Observance of my Orders,
 Commends thee to a better Charge : Men of [*Hubert*,
 Such Vigilance are scarce, and should be cherish'd.

Hub. The Trouble you have taken to convince your
 Coming in Person to observe my Care ; [Eyes,
 As it has made me proud to have been prov'd ;
 So shews it, Sir, how near this Boy concerns you !
 And therefore shall it mend my Vigilance. [hither !

K. *John*. Think not a Doubt of thee has brought me
 I came, my *Hubert*, to assist thy Care !
 T'inform — instruct thee — to explain my Orders !
 Nay to conceal them from the World beside ;
 For not within my Realms know I a Soul,
 Whose friendly Bosom I would sooner make
 The Casket of my secret Deeds, than *Hubert*.

Hub. I hope, Sir, you have many more as faithful !
 Yet this I know ! had I a Secret here,

Unfit for other Knowledge than your own;
 If Force or Torture would insist to know it, this
 Within my Heart should hide it from the World.

[*Shews a Dagger.*]

K. John. *Hubert*, thy Hand, thou art thy Master's
 There's scarce a Joy or Sorrow in my Soul, [Master!
 But longs to find its Fellowship in thee!

I had a Thing to say — I know thou'rt secret :

Yet 'tis of such a Nature — now I dare not !

The Sun is in the Heav'ns ! and his gay Beams,
 Exciting Mirth and Pleasure through the World,
 Are all too wanton and too full of Gauds

To give me Audience — No, *Hubert*, the Time
 For Speech like mine — were when the midnight Bell,

With Sound of iron Tongue, proclaim'd the dead
 And drousy Truce of worldly Cares and Labour !

The Place --- some dark Church-yard or Charnel-house,
 Where Tombs, or Bones, and Sculls, might only catch
 My Words ! There could I meet thee, swoll'n with

When that thy surly Spirit Melancholy [Wrongs,
 Had bak'd thy Blood, and made it heavy, stagnate !

Which else runs trickling up and down the Veins,

Making that Idiot Laughter fill Mens Eyes,

Straining their Cheeks to idle Merriment,

A Passion hateful to my Purposes.

Hub. Have you a Purpose, Sir, more fell than Death ?
 To give, or to receive it, frights not *Hubert*;

Why then this Pause, this Diffidence of Soul ? [me ;

K. John. O ! *Hubert* ! could'st thou without Eyes behold
 Hear without Ears, or make without a Tongue

Reply, using Conceit alone, to sound my Wishes ;

Then, in the Face of this broad beaming Day,

Would I into thy Bosom pour my Thoughts,

With the same Confidence my Brain conceives them :

But to a Man like thee, whose Sense compleat

Might weigh against his Deeds their Consequence,

I dare not, *Hubert*, O, I dare not hint them.

Hub. Then, Sir, to ease your Heart, I will be plain ;
 I guess the Secret that distresses you :

Fear not to trust me, Sir, I'll do the Deed.

K. John.

K. *John*. Thou flatter'st me —

Hub. ——— I'll serve you, Sir, but yet ———

K. *John*. What yet ? hast thou a Doubt of me ?

Hub. ——— I've none.

Howe'er, because 'tis possible I may
Mistake your full Intentions, you too must
Be plain, and trust me with each Circumstance :
And, Sir, to shew you how secure you are,
There's my Dagger ; if, when you name the Deed,
You find me change, or shew Confusion in
My Looks, or start in my Reply a Doubt,
Or Scruple, to alarm your Jealousy,
Then, from my craven Heart, rip out your Trust!
When you have kill'd me, you resume the Secret.

K. *John*. Do I not know thee faithful ? ——— Keep
It may be useful ——— [thy Dagger,

Hub. ——— Where?

K. *John*. ——— Must I then speak it ?

Hub. Or how shall I be sure that I obey you ? [ter---

K. *John*. And yet, methinks, in Darkness I could bet-
This Light offends -- Shut forth the Sun and hear me !
[Hubert darkens the Windows.

K. *John*. So, -- so, -- this Gloom befits our Purpose --

Hub. ——— Now, Sir,

K. *John*. O ! Hubert ! Hubert ! Arthur --- is alive !

Hub. There lies your Grief, and you would have him --

K. *John*. ——— Dead !

He is a very Serpent in my Way !
A Pain to see, and Danger to my Steps !
If thou'rt my Friend, ——— remove him.

Hub. ——— When ?

K. *John*. This Night. ———

Hub. ——— By Death. ———

K. *John*. ——— A Grave. ———

Hub. ——— He shall not live. [Joy,

K. *John*. Enough, my Fears are hush'd ! and now with
I can embrace thee. O, think ! think, my Friend !
Howe'er I've worn my Crown ——— Thy Hand alone
Can make it easy on my Brow ——— This Night
To England set we forward ——— When 'tis done,

Bring thou the News — There full Reward shall wait thee. *[Exit King John.]*

Hub. Now to my Office, let me think upon't,
As to the Time --- the Place --- the Means --- why not
This very Hour? There, where he is --- by this!

[Drawing his Dagger.]

Yet hold — to see the Dagger ere he feels
The Blow; his Screams may give Alarm without;
That -- that we must avoid -- unseen prevents it.
Perhaps he sleeps -- then, without Noise, we end him.
Steal on him softly, and observe — he prays!
The fitter for his Fate — a second Thought
Determines to my Wish — suppose, when dead,
Some Proof were left that he destroy'd himself;
The Means, kept secret, will be half the Merit:
That crowns the Work; by this his Beads are counted --
Lift --- no --- he's praying still --- ha --- what is't I
hear!

Distraction to my Sense! — he prays for me!
For *Hubert*! who has made his Chains sit easy,
And thanks high Heav'n he has so kind a Keeper.
What means this damp Reluctance on my Brow?
These trembling Nerves, this Ague in my Blood?
Is Death more cruel from a private Dagger, *[sands?*
Than, in the Field, from murd'ring Swords of thou-
Or does the Number slain make Slaughter glorious?
Why then is Conscience more restrain'd in me, *[sleep*
Than in a crown'd Ambition? Conscience there can
Secure by Custom and Impunity:
Shall Custom, then, excuse the Crimes of Pow'r,
And shall the Brave be baffled by a Shadow?
Let sickly Conscience shake the vulgar Soul,
That Brute-like plods the beaten Paths of Life,
Without Reflexion on its Slavery — no,
Be *Hubert's* Actions, like his Thinking, free.

Enter Arthur.

He's here: Young Prince, I have to talk with thee.

Arth. O! *Hubert*, I'm glad thou art return'd;
Thou told'st me thou would'st move my Uncle for
My Liberty, and hast thou seen him? ha!

What

What means that thoughtful Brow? those folded Arms?
 And why this Noon-tide Gloom? this doleful Shade?
 Art thou not well? I prithee tell me, *Hubert*;
 Or has my Uncle's Answer made thee sad?
 For me bad News is better than Suspense.

Hub. Be satisfy'd — for thou must die a Prisoner.

Arth. A Prisoner! Tedious Life! O, cruel Uncle!
 Is there no Hope, dear *Hubert*? must I pine
 Away my Days within these lonesome Walls?
 For Life a Prisoner, said'st thou? —

Hub. ——— Only Death
 Can end thy Miseries —

Arth. ——— Then Death were welcome!

Hub. I take thee at thy Word. This Dagger shall
 Release thee. —

Arth. — Ha! Why dost thou fright me, *Hubert*?

Hub. Thy Fate is in my Hand; raise not thy Voice
 On Pain of lingring Wounds. Now, then observe me:
 Those golden Tablets I have seen thee use,
 Without Delay produce them, quick —

Arth. ——— Here! here!

O! *Hubert*, I have a Diamond on my Finger too,
 Take that: Within I've other Gems of Value;
 My little Pray'r-book is with precious Stones
 Beset, and clasp'd with Gold; I'll yield thee all.
 Nay, more, my wretched Mother (give me Time
 To write) I know will starve her State to save me!
 Let me but live, though here in Misery;
 And, *Hubert*, I will find the Means to make
 Thy Life one live-long Age of Happiness.

Hub. Think'st thou I came to rob thee of thy Toys?

Arth. It is not Robbery: Why so harsh a Name?
 It is thy Right, good *Hubert*; am I not
 Thy Captive, fairly taken in the Field?
 Therefore whate'er was mine, by the known Laws
 Of War, is duly thine by glorious Claim,
 Thy Right and Purchase of superior Valour.

Hub. I let him talk too much: I must be speedy—

[*Apart.*

Down foolish Qualm; here, write as I shall dictate.

Arth. Most willingly. O! any Thing t'appease thee.

Hub. For secret Reasons we must make thy Death
Seem to the World thy voluntary Choice —
Nay no Reluctance, do it. —

Arth. ——— Cruel *Hubert* !

Must I do more than die ? O ! Mercy ! Mercy !

Hub. Suppress thy Voice, or thou art Days in dying.

Arth. I will ; O, spare me, *Hubert*, but a Moment !
But while I call once more on Heav'n ! indeed,
I'll not be loud ! alas ! I need not, there

The softest supplicating Sigh is heard to Heav'n.

Hub. First, as I bid thee, write ; then shalt thou

Arth. What would thy Rage enjoin me ? [pray.

Hub. ——— Write me thus :

“ From an injurious World and doleful Prison,

“ By my own Hand this Dagger set me free.”

Write.

Arth. ——— O ! *Hubert*, kill not my Soul, nor let
Me send, in Death, a Falshood up to Heav'n ! [thee.

Hub. Write, or thou dy'lt before a Pray'r can 'scape

Arth. Should I write this, what Pray'r could wash
The Sin ? No, *Hubert*, no, if I must die, [away
I dare not taint my Innocence ; and since

Thy Heart has none -- may Heav'n have Mercy on me !

[Drops the Tablets.

Hub. Wilt thou provoke my Rage ?

Arth. ——— How can I help it !

If I refuse to write, I can at worst but die,
And should I write next Moment thou wilt kill me.

Was it for this I sent my Pray'rs for *Hubert* !

Hub. ——— Ha !

Arth. This very Hour I pray'd. O ! if an Angel
Should have dropp'd from Heav'n t' have told me this,
So well I thought of *Hubert*, O ! I could not,
Could not have believ'd him ! — [Hubert, after some

Pause of Confusion, throws down the Dagger.

Hub. I cannot bear this Innocence ! —

Arth. ——— O Heaven !

My Prayer is heard, *Hubert* is what he was.

In his relenting Eyes his Virtue lives,

And, like my Guardian Angel, wakes me from This

This Dream of Death. ———

Hub. ——— Short-sighted Wretch
To think such Cruelty was practicable! [*To himself.*
O! raise thee from the Earth, poor injur'd Prince!
Thy Youth, thy Innocence, thy blooming Virtue,
Have conquer'd and redeem'd my Soul from Ruin!

Arth. Now thou hast taught my Eyes to weep for thee!
O *Hubert*! wilt thou spare me? shall I live?

Hub. Not all thy Uncle's Treasure, nor his Honours
Shall tempt me to thy Harm! O Sleep secure!
Hence to some Fort in *England* will I bear thee:
There shall a short Concealment be thy Guard,
Till Fate and kinder Seasons may relieve thee.

Arth. O might I once behold the Fields of *England*,
Tho' from a Prison-Tower, the Prospect would delight
me.

Hub. This Night shall speed us in our Voyage—Ha!
What knocking!

Arth. ——— How I tremble!

Hub. ——— Be compos'd.
Some Officer with notice from the Guard,
How now! the News?

Enter an Officer.

Off. ——— The Lady *Constance*, Sir,
Is taken —

Arth. ——— Ha! My Mother!

Hub. ——— Where? from whence?

Off. Hearing her Son was Pris'ner in this Castle,
Her Griefs have ventur'd, with a small Retinue,
To risk the Mercy of an Enemy,
In hope to have a Sight of him: She waits
Without, and begs in Tears to have an Audience.

Hub. Conduct her to the Council Room — we attend
her.

[*Exit Officer.*

Come, Prince; to dissipate thy Terrors past,
We'll venture to admit this Interview.
Short must it be ———

Arth. ——— It shall, indeed, dear *Hubert*.
I'll not misuse thy Goodness. ———

Hub.

Hub. ———— O my Shame!
How will thy Terrors ever be aton'd!

Arth. Despair not, *Hubert*! let thy Comfort be,
Howe'er thy Soul has wander'd into Error,
No Virtue claims more Praise than Penitence;
Has not the holy Parable declar'd
That one poor Soul recover'd, from astray,
Does more triumphant Joy to Heav'n convey,
Than flows from ninety-nine, that never lost their Way. }



ACT IV. SCENE I.

The *Dauphin's* Camp, near *St. Edmondsbury*.

Enter in Arms, Salisbury, Pembroke, Warren, Arundel with other Lords, &c. attended.

SALISBURY.

THUS far our Measures for Redress have prosper'd:

France by her Aid of Arms approves our Cause;
The King, too weak to face us, is retir'd;
His People, by the Bulls of *Rome*, absolv'd
From their Allegiance, throng to our Support:
Never had *English* Freedom Hope more sanguine!
Let but this Crisis hold our Union firm;
Now shall our Charter seal'd, to Ages hence
Record our ample Rights and Liberties. [Concern

Pemb. Those Rights obtain'd, my Lords, our next
Is to dismiss in Peace the Arms of *France*:
For if Intelligence deceives me not,
Pandulph, since the Report of *Arthur's* Death,
Has publickly avow'd, that as King *John*
By Excommunication stands abjur'd,
His Crown is to the *Dauphin's* Head consign'd!
That I must own my *English* Heart — disgusts!

Salis. If *Rome*, my Lord, has promis'd more to *France*,
Than *English* Subjects are content to yield,

Let,

Let, as she may, proud *Rome* acquit herself.
 No! shou'd this *Dauphin* to her Crown succeed;
 Our precious Isle becomes to *France* a Province!
 That Thought — O! it embitters all we've done!
 Let us, for shame, not lay ourselves the Plan
 Of abject Slavery to foreign Power:
 Shall petty Vice-Roys lord it o'er our Nobles?
 Shall light-heel'd *Frenchmen* dance upon our Greens,
 While we at Distance sigh beneath our Chains,
 Nor join the Carrols of their apish Triumph!

Pem. No *English* Soul but spurns against the Thought;
 Yet still, my Lords, a Medium must be kept:
 This *Dauphin*, while our Friend, we must caress,
 Holding his Aid of Arms in Amity;
 Though firmly fixt, that neither *Rome* nor *Paris*
 Shall ever give to *England* Kings or Laws.

Salis. With gentle Love then, and with due Regard,
 Let us attend his Highness at his Rising;
 Receive, as Soldiers, with our Smiles his Orders;
 As Chief obey him; never as our King!

Arun. But see, my Lords, the *Dauphin* is at hand,
 And with a chearful Eye approaches us.

Enter Dauphin attended.

Salis. Good Health and happy Morning to your High-
Pemb. Your early Stirring has prevented us. [ness.

Dau. My Lords of *England*, we are bound to you.
 Our Scouts this Morning brought us early Word,
 That ere the Setting of the Yester Sun,
 King *John*, but from what Cause alarm'd, they say not,
 Struck all his Tents for sudden secret March:
 Northward he still sets on, and flies before us;
 Yet we at last shall force him to a Stand,
 Though to the hindmost *Orcades* we hunt him.
 Have we no farther News?————

Salis. ————— My Letters, Sir,
 Inform us, that on *Tuesday* last, from *Roan*,
Hubert, who had in charge imprison'd *Arthur*,
 Was seen to land at *Dover*, all in haste;
 Where hearing that the King was to the North

Retir'd,

Retir'd, 'twas thought he posted on the Spur,
To follow him : His leaving *Roan* so soon,
And parting in such hurry from his Post,
Gives foul Suspicion that the secret Charge
Of *Hubert*, in the Death of *Arthur* ——— ended.

Dauph. If this be true, it cannot long be secret ;
But, till his Death from Evidence is certain,
We must suspend the Varying of our Measures.

Pem. If his Ambition dares out-step our Treaty, }
Those Measures must have our Consent to vary. } *Aside* .-

Dauph. Prepare we then to press him by Pursuit :
Is this the mighty *John*, who in the Field
Of *Mirabel* mow'd down our Troops like Grain,
And brought his Harvest home of Spoils to *England* ?
Now like the Vermin Fox, from Earth to Earth
He flies, nor finds a Citadel for Safety !
But why this Wonder at his Flight ? since now
Those valiant Barons that obey'd oppose him ?
How seem the People in those Parts affected ?

Salif. The graver Sort, that bear with Grief the War,
Religiously accuse the impious King,
Terming his Treatment of the holy Chair
A Madness ! Other Tongues, of Speech more free,
Insist that *Rome*'s more cruel than the King,
Who, tho' his Rashness urg'd Offence too far,
Yet has his Punishment outweigh'd the Error.
But see ! the Cardinal approaches, Sir,
To lead the People in his holy Charge ;
He better may inform you of their Temper.

Enter Pandulph.

Pand. 'Tis well ! 'tis well ! ye pious Sons of War !
This dread Array becomes our holy Cause !
O ! may the matchless glory of your Arms,
With the dire Vengeance on this Nation pour'd,
Go hand in hand, to future Ages down,
At once the Praise and Terror of the World ! [rious !

Dauph. Never had Christian Swords a Cause more glo-

Salif. As for the Glory, *France* and *Rome* may share it,
Our honest Swords compound for Liberty. [Apart.
Dauph.

Dauph. But say, Lord Cardinal, how bears the Land
This Driving, from our Christian Fold, their King?
What wholsom Fruit has the Severity
Produc'd? ———

Pand. ——— Never did sad Calamity
(The Consequence of sacred Pow'r oppos'd)
Make, in one Day, such havock of a People!
No sooner was the dread *Anathema* denounc'd,
But, like the burst of Thunder from the Heav'ns,
It struck the shudd'ring Nation with Dismay!
Even pale Devotion, at the Doom, stood silent,
Nor dar'd to lift her downcast Eye for Hope;
O! never was a State so terrible!
Now all the Rights of holy Function cease!
Infants unsprinkled want their Christian Names!
Lovers, in vain betroth'd, resume Despair,
Nor find a Sire to sanctify their Vows!
In vain the dying Sinner groans for Pardon!
Ev'n Penitence depriv'd of Absolution,
In all the Agonies of Fear expires!
Nor after Death has at the Grave a Prayer,
Or for the parted Soul one *Requiem* sung.

Dauph. O dreadful State! how can this moody King
Thus brave the Vengeance of offended Heav'n?

Pand. Wheree'er I pass the Voice of Lamentation,
From Crowds of Wretches prostrate at my Feet,
Pierces my Ear for Pity of their Woes!
Pity, indeed, will from my Eyes steal down;
But further Charity's restrain'd by Heav'n!
Then, like dumb Ghosts, with vacant Eyes they stalk,
As if, ev'n here, for foul Offences past,
Their Souls were in the State of their Purgation!

Salis. This mouthing Priest would swell the
Pow'r of *Rome*,
And paints her Bulls more frightful than they are:
I know he wrongs the truth; for wise Men smile
At all this Foam and Froth of holy Rage,
That fights beneath the Shield of Sanctity,
But to enlarge their Bounds of Carnal Power.

Apart.

Pem. Let him proceed — it serves our present
Purpose, Alarms

Alarms the Ignorant to join our Cause,
Whom 'tis not now our part to undeceive. } *Apart.*

Enter Melun.

Dauph. Welcome, *Melun*, I sent thee to observe
The Enemy; what fell within thy Notice?

Melun. North-eastward from our Camp, we are assur'd,
A fresh Supply is landed, Sir, from *France*;
Which from his Castles there King *John* has drawn,
To serve his greater Exigence at home;
And his late Movement, from the Plains of *Lincoln*,
Was but to guard those Forces thro' the Fens. [Passage;

Dauph. Our speedier March then must oppose their
Even, with the Morrow's Sun, this mighty Host
Shall see our Helmets blaze upon their Faces!

Melun. But what yet more might warm us to pursue him,
Is now his sacrilegious Tyranny!

For as I posted hither on my Way,
My Speed o'er-took a Troop of hoary Prelates,
The Lords of *London*, *Ely*, *Worcester*, *Bath*,
And *Hereford*, o'er-cast with venerable Sadness;
Whom, for their duteous daring to advise
Obedience to the holy Chair, King *John*
Had from his Presence spurn'd with Menaces
Of Death, if henceforth found within his Kingdom:
Which heavy dreadful Sentence to avoid,
Throws their Distresses at the Feet of *France*,
For charitable Shelter and Protection!

Dauph. Not only that, but on their Tyrant's Head,
With Heav'n's high Help, our Vengeance shall redress

Pand. Alas! his Fury stops not here, where'er [them.
His Pow'r extends, th' inferior Clergy feel it!
Proscrib'd and outed from the holy Convents,
Their Lands are seiz'd tho' sacred to their Function,
And to th' unhallow'd Use of Troops assign'd
Their Persons wheresoever found, misus'd,
Pillag'd, and scoff'd by martial Insolence!

[*An Attendant whispers Melun.*

Melun. The Rev'rend Prelates, Sir, are now arriv'd;
And beg your Highness will vouchsafe their Audience.

Dauph.

Dauph. Ourself will meet them on their Way : My
Of *England*, hold we all in Readiness; [Lords
Our Army with the creeping Night shall march,
That ere the Foe can from his drowsy Limbs,
Shake off his Lothness to the Call of Action,
Our Onsets, like a Torrent, may devour him :
So from the lofty Mountains, Snows let loose
Roll to the Vale with Inundation down,
While Flocks and Herds in Seas of Pasture drown.

[*Exeunt all but Pandulph.*]

Pand. The Ardour of this *Dauphin* must be watch'd;
His headstrong Youth may grow, upon Success,
Intractable, as *England*, to the holy See ;
Therefore the secret Overtures of *John*,
To which our Spies inform us he inclines,
Must we with Temper cherish to Submission.
How far this fresh Supply of Arms may change him,
Stands yet in doubt — A Day at least resolves us:
But hark! from whence this Trumpet? Now, the News.

Enter Officer.

Off. An Envoy from King *John* express arriv'd,
Desires Admittance to your Eminence. [ceive him.

Pand. This -- tallies with our Scheme -- Now to re-
If he brings Letters, — conduct him to our
Secretary. —————

Off. Letters he has, my Lord, but says,
To your own Hand he must deliver them.

Pand. So absolute! produce this, Insolent! [*Ex. Off.*
As yet the Speech of our Displeasure must be warm!

[*Falconbridge approaching slowly, kneels to Pandulph.*
Whence and from whom thy Business? from your King?

Fal. Most eminent, most holy Lord rever'd!
Imploring first a Blessing on my Charge,
This from my contrite Master makes it known.
Let me not rise unblest'd. [Gives a Letter.

Pand. ——— Couldst thou divide
The Legate from the Man, thou shouldst not kneel
In vain — but Blessings from the Realms are banish'd.

Fal. May Piety and Penitence restore them. [*Rising.*

Pand. The humble Bearing of this Minister }
At length, I see, bespeaks an humble Master. } *Aside.*

Fal. This Temper of his Eminence, this
Of stately Charity foretels Success! [Form
He read from my Humility my Errand,
And darted from his Eye a conscious Tri-
umph!

[*Pand.* having read the Letter proceeds.

Pan. 'Tis done! once more proud Heresy } *Aside.*
shall stoop!

Triumphant *Rome* for ever now shall tread
Upon rebellious Crowns, and at her Will dis-
pose them!

But soft! conceal we with Contempt the Joy!
Suppress the Pleasure, and enlarge the Triumph!

Well then these Letters stile thee *Falconbridge*,
And give thy Speech full Credit from thy Master:
But yet, alas! the humble Penitence
He here professes, must give ample Proof
Of his Sincerity. —

Fal. ——— Can that be doubted?
When to the holy See resign'd he bends,
To wear an humble tributary Crown?

Pand. Though we are bound in Charity to hope
The best, it still behoves us to be cautious;
Lest worldly Views impose upon the Mercy
Of an indulgent Mother. —

Fal. ——— How! impose!

Pand. What means that Echo, Sir? ———

Fal. ——— Shall I be plain?

Pand. Observe thy Distance and thy Rev'rence due;
Nor, for thy Soul, let ought escape thy Tongue,
That unbefits our holy Dignity
To hear. —

Fal. ——— My Lord, I cannot cull my Phrases;
Nor came I here to purge the Conscience of
King *John*, but to solicit Peace with *Rome*. [vail?

Pand. Canst thou suppose this Treatment will pre-

Fal. I think our mutual Int'rest should prevail.

Pand. Int'rest?

Fal. — My Lord, My Lord, that's the plain Sense,
Howe'er with specious Terms 'tis gilded o'er:

And

And you, who know that Princes are but Men,
Must know, unless where Passions intervene,
That Int'rest is the Spring that moves their Glory!

Pand. Wouldst thou give carnal Views to holy Pow'r?

Fal. This is no Time, my Lord, to silence Truth!
Our Masters both have been too jealous of
Their Rights, and to Extremities have urg'd them!
To urge them farther, might to both be fatal!
For say, your holy Vengeance should prevail,
That *France* by Conquest seize the Crown of *England*;
Would such united Empire give no Fears
To *Rome* of worse Encroachments on her Pow'r?
Take heed, my Lord, Ambition is a rav'nous Beast!
Feed not this *Dauphin's* Hope too high! whose Strength
May like the Lion's home-bred Whelp, grown up,
Devour the very Hand that foster'd him.

Pand. Give me a Moment's Pause — to aid our
Mercy.

This Bluntness, tho' offensive, is convinc^ving: } *Aside.*
And yet the sacred Honour of the Chair
Must have its Pomp of Reverence-- Within an Hour
Attend me at the neighbouring Convent! There
Our Measures more digested shall dispatch thee.

[*Exit Pand.*]

Fal. With what reluctant Gravity and Pride,
This Priest receives the Wishes of his Soul!
Why do I blame him? did not I the same?
When humbly kneeling, at his rev'rend Feet,
I cover'd with Humility my Scorn!
Yet Int'rest overlooks the mutual Cheat!
It must be so! were Men t'appear themselves,
Set free from Customs that restrain our Nature,
Nor Wolves nor Tigers would dispute more fiercely!
Yet all we boast above the Brute is ——— what?
That in our Times of need we dare dissemble!
How vile is the Preeminence we're vain of!
Yet cold Sincerity could ne'er have heal'd
Our Breach with *Rome*: There Art was useful!
O! could it equally at home succeed!

E

Tempting

Tempting our Barons back to their Allegiance !
 Let us but win their Forces from the War,
 Should that blest Hour intestine Feuds o'ercome,
 Our Village-Curs should bark these *Frenchmen* home.

King John in his Tent alone.

K. *John*. It must be so—— the Contest is in vain !
 Why should I risk a Kingdom for a People
 That are themselves unwilling to be free ?
 Whose Zeal, enslav'd, not only courts the Chains [them.
 Of *Rome*, but thinks in Conscience Kings should wear
 The moody Barons too, that head those Bigots,
 Take this Advantage of the holy Ferment,
 To lop the Branches of Prerogative.
 Then the reproachful Death of *Arthur* ! There's
 My jealous Fears have plung'd my Arm too far !
 A rash and fruitless Policy ! In Death
 He is become more terrible than living !
 Thence have I rais'd in *France* a stronger Claim ;
 The Guilt of *Hubert* too, now dreads t'approach me !
 Or may, to save himself, make me most odious.
 There Evils join'd must in their Ends be fatal !
Rome ! *Rome* then, that has ruin'd, must redeem me !
 The Terms — 'tis true are harsh and terrible
 To Honour ! to the Vulgar meritorious !
 They think the Bulls of *Rome* the Voice of Heav'n !
 And tremble for their King that dares contest them !
 The Pride of *Becket* too subdu'd my Father ;
 And yet his warlike Reign lives fam'd in Story !
 Princes should think no Price too dear for Pow'r ;
 And what are Kings without a People, *Hubert* ?

Enter Hubert.

Hub. At length, my Liege, I come to bring you News--

K. *John*. For which thy trait'rous Soul shall howl in
 Horrors !

Slave, thou hast undone me ! were not the Flames,
 That *Rome* had rais'd, sufficient to consume ;
 But thou must add thy Brand of Provocation,

Thy

Thy damn'd officious Murder, to the Ruin,
To give its Cause Pretence and fortify Rebellion?

Hub. Sir, you mistake the Service I have done you;
'Tis not the Claim of *Arthur* to your Crown,
But his reported Death provokes your People!

K. John. Villain! dar'st thou insult me on the Crime,
Thy Longing to commit seduc'd me to endure!

Hub. Whate'er my Inclination was — you now —

K. John. O! 'tis the Curse of Princes to be serv'd
By Slaves, that take their Wishes for a Warrant;
That, on the bare Inquietude of Looks,
Presume t'expound our Passions into Law,
And on the Sanction of a Frown commit [them.
Such Deeds as damns the Conscience that conceives

Hub. Yet, Sir, be patient when you hear my Story —

K. John. Think not involving me t'excuse thyself!
I had some Cause to wish him dead; but thou
Hadst none, saving what thy Nature prompted!
How oft have evil Deeds, for want of Means
To give them Practice, dy'd in the Conception?
But thou being present to the curst Occasion,
Ere scarce the Thought could ripen into Purpose,
Thy stony Heart made offer of the Deed,
And mock'd my Fears with impious Resolution!

Hub. My gracious Liege! I beg you be compos'd!

K. John. Hadst thou but shook thy Head, or made a
When I obscurely murmur'd my Disquiet; [Pause,
Hadst thou but shewn one Sign of inward Grace,
With one reluctant Shrug declin'd the Motion,
Pale Conscience then, retreating from the Guilt,
Had smother'd in my Breast the dreadful Deed,
Never to rise in my Reflexion more!
But thou, like the curst Fiend in Paradise,
Laidst lurking in my Paths of Ruminaton,
To watch the secret Wishes of my Soul,
And tempt its Frailty to eternal Ruin!

Hub. Now, Sir, yourself be judge! had I obey'd
Your dread Commands, how wretched had I made you?
For know, to give your Soul its former Peace,

Young *Arthur* lives! my coward Heart—has sav'd him!
I am but half the Villain you have spoke me. [Angel!

K. John. Prove me this true, and thy whole Soul is

Hub. O! when I came to practise on his Life,

I found the Execution was as far

Remov'd from what my first Conceit had form'd,
As Danger from Delight! as Hell from Heav'n!

His blooming Form, his Youth, his Piety,

His Resignation, Innocence, and Tears,

Rush'd as from Ambush on my lifted Aim,

And seiz'd me Captive to his Sufferings!

With melting Eyes I dropt the Poniard down,

And, at the hazard of your Rage, preserv'd him!

K. John. O! *Hubert! Hubert!* thou hast sav'd thy
Master!

Redeem'd him from the deepest, hideous Plunge,
That ever stain'd the Glories of Ambition!

The Rage thou feard'st now blushes into Joy,

And crowns thy Disobedience with Applause!

This Deed undone shall double thy Reward,

And pay thy Mercy with unbounded Favour!

But soft—our Cousin is return'd: At fitter Time

My Heart shall open more——mean while,

Be careful of my Fame, and form thy Fortune!

Enter Falconbridge.

Now, Cousin, is yet this Legate flexible?

Hast thou, though on his own high Terms, succeeded?

Fal. If, Sir, to have prevail'd on haughty *Rome*,

To tread in Triumph on the Crown of *England*,

Be deem'd Success; such Peace has *Rome* accepted.

The Time, the Terms, and solemn Ceremonies

Here more at large, the Legate has appointed.

[Presents a Writing.

K. John. Seasons must be obey'd! what from the
Barons?

Fal. What makes our Peace with *Rome* more need-
ful now;

The strong Report of *Arthur's* Death has worse

Effect

Effect on them than on the common Sort!
 The Vulgar only shake their cautious Heads,
 Or whisper in the Ear, wisely suspicious,
 Gripping the Hearer's Wrist—who starts—and stops—
 With wrinkled Brows--- and frowns -- and rolling Eyes!
 As if his Life depended on his Secrecy!
 I saw a Smith-stand with his Hammer thus!
 Who, while his Iron on the Anvil cool'd,
 With open Mouth swallow'd a Taylor's News!
 Of Thousands more of *Frenchmen* pouring on
 Our Coasts, in dreadful March of Fire and Sword!
 Another lean, unwash'd Artificer
 Cuts off his Tale, and talks of *Arthur's* Death!

K. John. Were this the worst, the freezing Vulgar yet
 Might, by our holy Peace with *Rome*, be thaw'd
 To their Allegiance: But the Barons! There!
 How such a needful Peace may weigh with them—

Fal. There stand we yet in Fear! for *Arthur's* Death
 Has so inflam'd the Spleen of their Complaints,
 That never shall their Swords in Peace be sheath'd,
 Or to Allegiance civil Arms return,
 Till the full Manner of his Death be question'd,
 And *Hubert*, whom their strong Suspicions charge,
 Be duly render'd to the publick Justice. [right

K. John. Now say that *Arthur* lives, who then shall
 A Monarch's Fame, and punish his Revilers?

Hub. Will they believe their Eyes, if I produce him

Fal. Ha! is it possible! produce him! *Arthur!*

Does he then live to shame this Calumny?

Hub. Hearing the Malecontents had thrown such vile
 Aspersions on the Head of Majesty,
 Unbidden have I dar'd to bring from *Roan*
 The living *Arthur* to confound the Falshood. [grounded.

K. John Now judge, how all their other Grievs are

Fal. Lies and Rebellion have been ancient Friends!

Hub. Here in the Castle, to this Camp adjacent,
 He now is plac'd, and when the King commands—

Fal. O Sir! I beg that *Hubert* and myself
 May to the Barons instantly produce him;

On such Conviction, with my Life I'll answer,
 Their Temper tho' misguided shall return
 And fall from *France* before her Force can face us!

K. *John*. Fly then this Moment, haste to undeceive them,
 That due Allegiance may defend her Pastures!
 No more let Jealousies, immers'd in Rage,
 Hazard those Liberties, which civil Swords
 Falsly maintaining might to Foes betray!
 Tell them their ancient Rights shall be confirm'd
 In great and ample Characters fam'd to Ages:
 Thus shall Obedience fortify our Throne,
 And mutual Love all Errors past atone. [*Exeunt.*



A C T V. S C E N E I.

Arthur on the Walls of a Castle.

A R T H U R.

O *Hubert! Hubert!* are my Hopes at last
 Confin'd within these lonely, ragged Walls!
 Was it for this thy fruitless Mercy spar'd me?
 Ah! what is Life depriv'd of Liberty?
 It shall be so, these Walls no more shall hide me:
 The Mote beneath I've fathom'd with a Line,
 And find its Depth proportion'd to my Stature;
 At worst, the Danger's less attempting to escape,
 Than pining here in hourly Fear of Death:
 Take Courage Heart! whatever Chance befall thee
 Cannot be sorer than my Suff'ring here.
 Eternal Providence, to thee I bow,
 Extend thy gracious Arm to save my Fall!
 But if thy sacred Pleasure has decreed,
 Thy sinful Creature must untimely bleed;
 For a repentant Soul, ye Saints, make room,

Who

Who seeks his Happiness in Worlds to come,
*[He leaps from the Walls, and is cover'd by a Pa-
 rapet between his Body and the Audience.]*

Enter Falconbridge, Hubert, Salisbury, Pembroke and
 Arundel. [come :

Salif. Prove him but living, and the Terms are wel-
 Nor think our Bodies have been cas'd in Steel,
 To wrong the native Course of royal Pow'r :
 But to assert our Liberties and Rights,
 As in the Laws of *Edward* they are cited.
 Which if the King by Charter shall confirm,
 And give Enfranchisement to Royal *Arthur*,
 Nor mew him up to choke his Days
 With barb'rous Ignorance, or deny his Youth
 The princely Helps of graceful Exercise,
 Then shall appear'd Resistance sheath her Sword,
 Or henceforth turn it on the Foes of *England*!

Fal. Spoke with the Spirit of an *English* Noble!
 Nought then remains, but that your Eyes have Proof
 Of *Arthur's* Health and princely Liberty.

Hubert, conduct us ———

*[As they are passing to the Castle, Salisbury sees the Body
 of Arthur in the Ditch.]*

Salif. ——— Ha! what Body's this,
 That in the Water, 'midst the Weeds and Rushes,
 Mischance or Malice has depriv'd of Life!

[They bring the Body forward:]
 Ha! 'tis he! 'tis *Arthur*! royal *Arthur* breathless!
 Pale, cold, and lost beyond Recovery!

Hub. O fatal Chance ———

Fal. ——— *Hubert*! if thou hast done
 This Deed, or but in Thought consented to it,
 Thou art more deeply damn'd than *Lucifer*!

Hub. By Heav'n! within this Hour I left him living!

Salif. This sure is the most savage Act of Power,
 The deadliest Wound that ever wall-ey'd Rage
 Or Malice gave the Heart of Innocence!

Fal. Villain! I do suspect thee grievously!

Hub. Then, on my Soul, most grievously you wrong me!

Salif. Wrong thee, Traitor! what Proof so palpable!

Hub. If I in Act, Direction or Consent,
Have done, conspir'd or compass'd ought
That has bereft this hapless Youth of Life,
Let Hell want Pains to punish me!

Salif. Since Murder thus defies the Pains of Hell,
Down then to Hell's wide Horrors that attend thee.

[Stabs him.]

Fal. What has your Rashness done, my Lord!

Salif. ———— A Deed
'That dries the Tears of Pity with Revenge!

Fal. *Hubert*, look up, and ere thy Breath forsakes thee,
Now, as thou hop'st to find eternal Mercy!
Inform us truly how this Youth was murder'd.

Hub. Then by those last dear Hopes I'm ignorant!
But 'tis the Fate of those who once are guilty,
Never to be believ'd when innocent.

Thus having once consented to destroy him,
The bare Intention was a Crime too great,
To pass unheaded by eternal Justice;

Yet, let me say ——— so may my Soul reach Heav'n,
As of this Prince's Death I'm innocent. [Dies.]

Fal. You hear, My Lords, a dying Man's Report.

Salif. We hear enough to charge his Death on Tyranny,
Whether by that vile Hand, or by Mischance,
It matters not, his Prison has destroy'd him!
Now back, Sir, to the King; tell him how ill
His Proofs of *Arthur* living have succeeded!
But how he dy'd our Swords shall have in Question;
Our Battles are at hand, if he thinks fit
To answer us in Arms, our Arms shall make
Reply——This tell him, Sir,——Our Parley's ended.

Fal. But this, and I have done. I know the King
Is still inclin'd to give your Grievs Redress:
Consider, therefore, if you prosecute

This War, how far more dangerous is the Cure
Your Swords apply, than what his Sceptre offers.

Salif. The Danger be on us ———

Fal.

Fal. ————— Farewel, my Lords. [*Exit Fal.*

Salis. Now bear we to our Camp this injur'd Object,
Which, like the Wounds of *Cæsar*, when expos'd,
Shall raise the common Pity to Revenge,
And warm the neutral Coward to our Cause :

But to his mournful Mother, O! what Heart,
What Tongue the dismal Tidings shall impart!

[*Exeunt with the Body of Arthur.*

SCENE, a Rome of State.

Enter in Procession (to solemn Musick) Pandulph, preceded by Clergy, &c. of several Orders. Then the Nobles and Officers of State before King John, (supported by two Abbots) wearing his Crown and Robes. Pandulph being seated, the King with the Abbots kneel to him.

Abbot. Thus bending to the Throne of *Innocent*,
Our holy Sov'reign Sire, whose Heav'n-born Pow'r
All Christian Crowns implicitly obey ;
Thus come we humble Supplicants in Sighs
And Sorrow for a sinful Son ; whose rash
Ambition in his Pride of Pow'r has dar'd ———

O! spare us to repeat the dreadful Crime,
Too black and terrible for Christian Ears !

But if the Pangs of Penitence may plead ———

K. John. Behold him prostrate, contrite, 'whelm'd
with Shame!

Off'ring this sacrifice of temp'ral Glory,
His Crown surrender'd to the holy See,
To mitigate the Wrath of Heav'nly Vengeance.

[*Lays his Crown at the Feet of Pandulph.*

Pand. Thy Penitence, thy contrite Heart, O Son,
Gives Joy and Transport to our holy Mother :
Not human Nature is more prone t'offend,
Than on sincere Repentance she to pardon!
Yet think not Crowns or Scepters could alone
Prevail, or tempt her, in the Pride of Nature,
T'accept these Off'rings of thy mortal Pow'r,
Which, as the human World esteems them——Thus
Beneath

Beneath her Foot she spurns their carnal Glory.

[*He treads upon the Crown.*]

But, as in social Life, Mankind requires
 Controlling Kings to rule their headstrong Passions,
 To curb Injustice by coercive Laws ;
 Thus from the sacred Apostolick Grace,
 As tributary Lord, dependent ever
 On our holy Father, supreme on Earth,
 Receive this Circle of imperial Sway
 Once more, to keep these temp'ral Realms in Awe,
 And fight the sacred Battles of the Chair.

[*Returns the Crown.*]

K. John. With lowly Reverence and humble Heart,
 Vowing Obedience to our sov'reign Pontiff,
 Unworthy I receive this temp'ral Crown ;
 But now must kneel for an afflicted People,
 Pierc'd with the Pains of Errors not their own !
 O! never must these guilty Eyes look up !
 Till holy Mercy shall restore their Peace,
 By Revocation of her dreadful Censures !

Pand. Arise, repentant Son, thy sweet Conversion
 Shall chase these Clouds of Vengeance from thy Land,
 Of Souls unheal'd will we resume the Cure :
 Nor foreign or domestick Foe shall now
 Presume to give thy fertile Fields Annoyance :
 Now shalt thou find the holy Breath, that blew
 This Tempest up, shall make the Storm subside.

This Dauphin's Thunder at our Word shall cease,
 And hush'd Ambition leave thy Realms in Peace.

[*Exeunt.*]

The Scene a Field.

Enter Dauphin, Melun, Salisbury, Pembroke, and
 Barons, &c.

[*late*]

Dauph. Why not to-night, my Lords? Are not his
 Supplies from *France* in the deep Marshes lost?
 Arms, Horses, Ammunition, Treasure, all
 Immers'd and bury'd in the Floods of *Welland*?
 And shall we now stand pausing o'er our Prey?

And

And by our cold Debates retard our Conquest?

Salif. Consider, Sir, our Shadows lengthen with
Our March! the Sun scarce lending Light to lead us!
Let us at least take Day enough for Slaughter;
Nor let their Fears, behind the Shield of Night,
Skulk from the Sword of blinded Victory.

Pem. And for the Succours they have lost, 'tis not
A Day or Moon's Duration can recruit them.

Salif. That Load will lie as heavy on their Hopes
To-morrow ———

Pem. ——— Should we now engage them, Sir,
While the long March that hangs upon our Troops,
Brings down the Spirit to a drooping Eye,
How might the Enemy, tho' less in Numbers,
Hail with Repose, and confident in Vigour,
With more than equal Strength sustain the Battle?

Salif. Let us then take th' Advantage of the Night
For Rest, and of the Morn for stronger Action.

Dauph. O! if your Spirits were inflam'd like mine,
To rest this Night would be a harder Toil,
Than all the Labours of immediate Battle!

See, *Pandulph* too, the holy Legate comes,
With eager Pace and Triumph in his Eye,
As if a Band of Angels on our part
Stood rank'd in Arms to stimulate our Action.

Enter Pandulph and Falconbridge. [Arms,

Pand. Joy, Peace, and bloodless Conquest crowns our
Our Wars are done: The Triumphs of this Day
Shall, in the Annals of revolving Empire,
Stand eminently high on Hills of Fame,
While Praise and Wonder, to a Transport rais'd,
Shall read this Record of religious Glory. [done.

Dauph. What means your Eminence? Our Wars are

Pand. Furl up thy Colours, and unbrace thy Drums,
King *John* is now no more an Enemy.

His Crown this Hour surrender'd at our Feet,
Which now in tributary Vassalage
He holds of *Rome*, has cancell'd all his Crimes.

His

His contrite Penitence has revok'd our Censures,
 Paternal Pardon has confirm'd his Throne,
 And now, e'en *France*, shall honour and embrace him.

Dauph. Eternal Vengeance! *France!* shall *France*
 embrace him?

His Crown surrender'd! Ha! what Crown has *John*,
 That is not claim'd by *France*? Or how comes *Rome*,
 In wrong to us, t'accept that Resignation?
 Are thus your Champions of the Chair rewarded?
 Is this the Kingdom which her Bulls decreed me?
 Has *John's* Repentance thrown his Crimes on us,
 That *France* must like a Vassal wave her Right,
 Because the holy Pride of *Rome's* appeas'd?

Pand. Is't possible? —

Dauph. — Was it not you that first
 Inflam'd this War? And to my Father's Doubts
 Clear'd up my Title to fair *England's* Crown?
 Is not the Bar of *Arthur's* Right, as thou
 Foretold'st, remov'd? Is he not dead? Nay murder'd?
 (Is that too pardon'd by your juggling Mercy?)
 Is there a Life before me now, that itays
 My Right, or makes it, at your Will, precarious?

Pand. Beware, rash Youth, nor tempt our holy Ven-
 Unknowning as thou art! I tell thee, Prince, [geance,
 This *England* is *St. Peter's* Fee, and Kings
 Hereafter in that holy Right shall rule it.

Dauph. Cardinal, 'tis false, I do deny th' Assertion.
England was never yet, nor ever shall,
 While Arms or Life can urge my Claim, become
 The Papal Patrimony. No, nor shall
 This Subterfuge, this Farce of *John* distress'd,
 Laugh me to Peace, or save him from my Vengeance.

Pand. O mortal Sin! abandon'd Imputation!

Dauph. Think'st thou, fond Man, I brought my Arms
 so far,

Only to slake *Rome's* holy Thirst of Sway?
 If you want Kingdoms, buy them with the Danger;
 Endure the Toils, and fight yourselves your Battles;
 Nor hope to make my youthful Sword and Honour,
 The

The Tool and Property of Priestly Pow'r.

Pand. Hear me and tremble! while I tell thee, Boy,
As well thou might'st provoke the Serpent's Sting,
Or seize upon the feeding Lion's Paw,
As safely might'st oppose thy naked Eye,
Against the Level of a bearded Arrow,
As tempt the Vengeance of our holy Pow'r :
This Instant quit thy hostile Purpose, and depart
This Land -- or Woe on thy rebellious Head. [*Exit.*

Dauph. Now by the Royal Rage that swells my
Here will I leave these lifeless Bones, [Heart,
To Kites and Ravens an inglorious Prey,
Than e'er hold Friendship with this recreant *John*,
Or yield an *English* Pasture to the Pride of *Rome*.

Fal. And by that Royal Blood thou hast defam'd,
I plaud thy Treatment of this Priestly Tyrant ;
Yet think not, that in fear of thee our King
Has bow'd to this insatiate Pontiff. No,
But to conciliate to his Love his People,
Whose Blaze of Zeal had blinded their Obedience :
For know, the warlike Monarch is at hand,
Not trusting to this deep-mouth'd Legate's Thunder,
But to his Pow'rs prepar'd ; whose Rods of War
Shall whip this dwarfish Rout, these Pigmy-arms,
From out the Circle of his Territories. [*answer thee.*

Dauph. Take to thy Saf'ty ; hence, our Drums shall

Fal. O that the Sun could hold his drooping Head
One Hour above the Earth to grace this Battle. [*row,*

Dauph. Reserve thy Vauntings for the dawning Mor-
Nor at the Night repine, whose Shades may save thee.

[*Exit Dauphin with his Train.*

Fal. Now, noble Lords, what think you of your
The holy Sword of *Rome*, you see, forsakes you ; [*Cause?*
Her Politicks, like other mortal Motives,
Begin their wiser Charities at home ;
Let but her pious Views be gorg'd with Pow'r,
Her full Contentment slumbers in her Chair,
And leaves Devotion for the vulgar Comfort!
For Shame resume your Sense! see for your selves!

And

And be no more the Ladders of Ambition!

Salif. Well hast thou warn'd us to oppose Ambition,
A Passion oft so ignorant of Glory,
By its own Nature so corruptible,
That it shall stoop to be a Tyrant's Slave,
To play the greater Tyrant o'er its People.
This ——— in the Shame of his surrender'd Crown,
Our servile King has prov'd a Truth notorious.

Fal. To you, to you, rash Lords, we owe that Stain,
Had your weak Cause alone supported you,
His Crown unblemish'd had maintain'd his Right!
Obedience to Prerogative had bow'd,
And in the Monarch's Grandeur both been glorious!
Can you then think the Perfidy is worse,
That stoops below itself to save a Kingdom,
Than is the mad Resistance that would sell it:
For such must be the Consequence, if *France*
Prevail; *France* then becomes your Purchaser.
Rome might, indeed, plead Custom for her Claim,
But *France* had none, save what your Fears have found,
Or to your foreign Masters may have granted.
Would you, then, change the Lion for the Fox?
Be rather Slaves to grinding Vice-Roys here,
Than bear the Errors of your native King?

Salif. Perdition on the abject Soul that thinks it!
No, *Falconbridge*, whate'er has drawn our Swords,
However under Grievances we grone,
Think not but *English* Spirits would as soon
Admit the Devil, as a Vice-Roy here.
No, not to lord it o'er a Village in
The Fens of *England*: —

Fal. ——— Then I ask no more!
Howe'er our civil Discord may divide us,
Let not our Enemy enjoy the Breach.

Salif. Against Invasion let us, close united, [*Embracing.*
If Vows or sacred Oaths can hold our Faith,
Already have we sworn, that no Success
Shall lead Obedience to the Claims of *France*. [King

Fal. This News has hush'd my Fears. This to the
Will

Will I recount, in hopes we yet may save,
By Peace, those Streams of Blood that boil for Battle;
If not, — tho' now to diff'rent Sides we part,
Let each Opposer shew an *English* Heart.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

King John from his Tent, supported by two Attendants.

K. John. O feeble Frame! is this a Time to fail me!
When my collected Spirits should inflame
The Eye to lead and animate the War?
Why has the Monarch so much Use for Life?
Yet in his Health is levell'd with the Peasant!
O painful Majesty! unequal State!
Not all the gorgeous Pomp, thy Flags of Pow'r,
Thy Dignities, Dominions, Ceremonies,
The Crown, the Sceptre, and the Royal Ball,
The purple Robe, nor Princely Crowds, whose Press
Of Duty intercepts the wholsom Air;
Not all these Glories, for one precious Hour,
Can buy the Beggar's Health or Appetite.

Enter Falconbridge.

[*onward;*

Fal. To Arms, my Liege, th'embattl'd Foe comes
Their Armour, gilded by the blazing Sun,
Reflects another Day. Defend me, Heav'n!
How fares your Majesty? —

K. John. — Disorder'd still!
This Autumn Fever hangs upon my Limbs;
But in the Field we'll sweat it from the Blood!
Prepare my lighter Helmet and my Litter:
Cousin, on thee the Conduct and the Care
Of this Day's Action may devolve, — be watchful.

Fal. With my best Blood will I account for it!
But go not, Sir, I beg you, to the Field.

K. John. If Life is done, let me with Honour end it.
Lead forth my Horse, and let the Trumpet sound
The warning Blast to Victory or Death.

Fal. Would you repose, it might relieve you. —

K. John. ————— No!

This

This Tumult of the Spirits shall have Action.
 My fierce, though mortal, Flames within shall glow,
 Refulgent on my Brow --- and burn against the Foe.
 [*Exeunt leading off the King.*]

The SCENE opening discovers the funeral Cérémonie of Arthur moving towards Swinstead-Abbey to a Dead-March; Lady Constance with the Abbot and Mourners attending.

[down,
Const. Down, down, thou rolling Sun, to Darkness
 Lose in eternal Shades thy hateful Beams,
 Never to give these Eyes more painful Day!
 See there an Object stains thy conscious Lustre!
 Not all thy Promises of blooming Springs,
 Or Autumn Fruit, can this dead Flow'r supply!
 Thus mercilessly cropp'd by fell Ambition!
 O since the Birth of *Cain*, the first Male-Child,
 To him that did but yesterday suspire,
 There was not such a gracious Creature born.

Abbot. Repine not at the Will of Heav'n, and this
 Thy Comfort be, that in the World to come
 The dearest Friends shall meet and know each other.

Const. O didst thou see his chang'd and ghastly
 Semblance,
 Thy frightened Sense would not remember him;
 That Canker Death has so devour'd his Beauties,
 So blanch'd the damask Bloom upon his Cheek;
 All the soft Smiles that wanton'd in his Eye,
 The sweet and graceful Spirit of his Features,
 So sunk, so faded from their native Hue,
 That, e'en in Heav'n, my Soul must pause to know him.

Abbot. O yet retire! part from this Feast of Death,
 Where solemn Rites and Forms on Forms succeeding,
 Feed but the fatal Appetite of Grief!

Hark, the last Bell now calls us to the Grave. [*Bell tolls.*]

Const. O piercing Sound! O agonizing Knell!
 Stay your officious Haste! one Moment's Pause!

[*To the Bearers.*]

And the same Service shall be sung for both
 Our parted Souls! Inexorable Death!

I ask

I ask thee not for Mercy! No, be cruel still!
 Behold in me the Wretch that dares thy Rage!
 A grieving Mother, whose Distress defies thee!
 That thus arrests thy Triumph o'er her Child, [him;
 And will not let it pass. The Grave shall not devour
 O! we must never part, one Earth shall hold us,
 Now seize me, strike me, and compleat the Tyrant!

Abbot. Be watchful o'er her Health, gently support her
 Till Grief subsiding may admit Repose:

[*To her Attendants, who lead her off.*

But hark, the Terrors of the Field are ended!
 The hostile Wounds of *France* and *England* now
 Are, by the Trumper's loud Retreat, proclaim'd.
 Behold the harass'd Barons from the Toil retiring.
 [*Exit after Constance.*

Enter Pembroke, Salisbury, &c. *at a distance.*

Pem. We were deceiv'd, the King was stronger than
 we thought him.

Salif. I fear'd his late Submission to the Pope,
 Would draw the Commons thronging to his Side:
 Had not the timely Night stept in between
 Our Swords, I tremble to conceive what Fate
 Had follow'd us. —

Pem. — But see the Corps of *Arthur*!

Salif. Alas! poor injur'd Youth, but for thy Death
 Our private Grievs had spar'd this fruitless Battle,
 And due Redress had hush'd us into Peace.

Enter Melun *wounded, led by Soldiers.*

Melun. O lead me, lead to the revolted Barons!

Salif. When we were happy we had other Names.

Melun. I come, my Lords, to warn you of your
 Danger;

When you have serv'd the *Dauphin's* Ends, you die.

Salif. Die for our Services? explain this Riddle.

Melun. Know then, this *Dauphin* hearing you had
 Your Swords, by private Oaths, never to yield [bound

F

Your

Your Crown, or e'en a Province of your *England*, to
 The Claims of *France*. This so inflam'd his Rage,
 That on the Altar at *St. Edmond's-Bury*,
 Where, to your firm Alliance, first he swore
 Determin'd Faith and lasting Amity ;
 There did he secretly make After-oath,
 That when his Arms should have subdu'd King *John*
 Your Heads should be the Victims of his Right
 Refus'd. ———

Pem. — Perfidious *France* ! ———

Salif. ——— Can this be true?

Melun. What in this World should make me now
 deceive you ?

Have I not hideous Death within my View ?
 See you not Life like a meer Form of Wax,
 Dissolving to the Fire ? When Life is done,
 Useless were all Deceit ; but needful is Remorse,
 When Oaths so ill devis'd require Atonement ;
 Repentance, then, has mov'd me to reveal
 This Oath, which in my Rashness I had taken,
 If you can pardon it ——— Your Charity
 Will hence appoint me to some safe Repose,
 Where I may breathe my latest Hour in Peace,
 And pass my dire Account with Heav'n's Inquiry.

Salif. Gently conduct him to Relief and Rest.

Dauphin, we thank thee for this Treachery,
 That now so timely warns us to repay it.
 What a strange Mixture had this *Frenchman's* Heart
 Tainted with Falshood, yet inclin'd to Honour ?

Pem. That Mystery, my Lord, explains itself ;
 His Grandfire was, you know, of *English* Blood ;
 Perhaps from him he had his Honesty.

Salif. Let us then make our Profit of his Virtue,
 Protect ourselves, and while Occasion serves,
 March to the King, accept his offer'd Peace,
 With old Allegiance heal our civil Wounds,
 And on this *Dauphin's* Head revenge his Falshood.

[*As they go off, Constance re-enters to the Funeral,*
with the Abbot, &c.

Const.

Const. Thy holy Counsels, Father, have reliev'd me ;
Misfortunes now, familiar to my Sense,
Abate their Terror. Now my peaceful Heart,
With tearless Eyes, shall wait him to the Grave.

Enter Falconbridge.

Fal. O Reverend Father, haste, the dying King
Implores thy holy Aid. ———

Abbot. ——— Said'st thou the King ?

Fal. Dying he seems, or cannot long survive :
Whether by Heat of Action in the Field,
His latent Fever is inflam'd to Danger,
Or, as Suspicion strongly has avouch'd,
The gloomy Monk, who serv'd him with the Cup,
Might impiously infuse some Bane of Life,
We know not ; but his Interval of Sense
In Groans calls earnest for his Confessor.

Const. In his accounted Sins be this * remember'd.

[* *Pointing to the Corps of Arthur.*

Fal. If Grief or Prejudice could bear to hear me,
I could a Truth unfold would calm thy Sorrows.

Const. Lies not my Child there murder'd ? ———

Fal. ——— Hear my Story.

[*He seems to talk apart with Constance.*

Enter Salisbury with Arundel, &c.

Salis. How fortunate the Hour ! that he had Sense
To ratify our Rights and seal the Charter.

Abbot. What News, my Lords ? How fares the King ?

Salis. I fear me, poison'd ! his whole Mass of Blood
Is touch'd corruptibly, and his frail Brain,
Which some suppose the Mansion of the Soul,
By the disjointed Comments that it makes,
Foreshews its mortal Office is expiring.

Fal. And *Hubert* dying disavow'd the Deed.

[*Apart to Constance.*

Const. Admitting this, that meer Mischance destroy'd
him,

What but his Wrongs expos'd him to Mischance ?

Nor therefore are my Sorrows more reliev'd,
But as Oppression may be less than Murder.

Enter Pembroke.

The King seems more at Ease, and holds Belief,
That were he brought into the open Air,
It might assuage the Ferment that consumes him.

Salif. Behold the sad Remains of Royalty!

Fal. Let those who lov'd him not endure the Sight,
When he is gone, my Hopes in Life are friendless.

[*Exit.*

King John is brought in.

Abbot. How fares your Majesty? ———

K. John. ——— The Air's too hot.

It steams, it scalds, I cannot bear this Furnace!
Stand off, — and let the Northern Wind have Way!
Blow, blow, ye freezing Blasts from *Iceland* Skies!
O blisful Region, that I there were King!
To range and roll me in eternal Snow,
Where Crowns of Icicles might cool my Brain,
And comfort me with Cold. ———

Abbot. ——— O gracious Heav'n! ———
Relieve his Senses from these mortal Pangs,
That his reflecting Soul may yet look back
On his Offences past with Penitence!

K. John. Why am I tortur'd thus? I kill'd him not;
Was it so criminal to wish him dead!
If Wishes were effectual, O, my Crown,
My Crown should from the Grave with Joy redeem
him!

[*Tongue,*

Abbot. If Penitence, not Frenzy, prompts thy
Behold this Object of Calamity,
Whom thy Severities have sunk with Sorrow.
O carry not, beyond the Grave, your Enmity.

K. John. *Constance*, the mournful Relict of my
Brother,
How do thy Wrongs sit heavy on my Soul;

But

But who was ever just in his Ambition!
 Thou seest me now an Object of thy Triumph,
 The vital Cordage of my Heart burnt up!
 All to a single Thread on which it hangs
 Consum'd; now may the fearless Lamb approach,
 Now close the Lion Eye of Enmity.
 Hence but a Moment all this Royalty,
 This Pride of Pow'r will crumble into Ashes.

Abbot. In his Extremities Heav'n help the King.

Const. And may his contrite Soul receive its Mercy.

K. John. The Lamp of Life is dry — Thy Pray'rs,
 O Father!

At *Worcester* let these mortal Bones have Rest.
 My Eyes refuse the Light — the Stroke is giv'n.
 O, I am call'd — I wander — Mercy, Heav'n!

Const. He's gone.

The turbulent Oppressor is no more.
 The Hour of heav'nly Justice has at last
 Demanded his Account of *England's* Empire;
 But since he seem'd to pass in Penitence,
 Let all his Crimes be bury'd in his Grave.
 Thou Pow'r ador'd, what Thanks shall I repay thee,
 That my Afflictions have subdu'd my Soul,
 T'extend its Charity ev'n to my Enemies?
 Now, Life, I have no farther Use for thee;
 Defer a while the Obsequies of *Arthur*,
 Pass but some Hours and I shall soon o'ertake him,
 Then lay us in one peaceful Grave together.

[*Exit, led off.*]

Enter Falconbridge, who, seeing the King, starts back.

Fal. My Fears are true, good News comes now too
 late;

Deaf is the Ear which best might give it hearing.

Salis. O *Falconbridge*! if thou hast ought that may
 Dispel our gen'ral Consternation, speak it.

Fal. Something I bring to cheer this sudden Sadness;
 From *France* the Lady *Blanch*, arriv'd, has wrought
 Her

Her Consort *Dauphin* to such peaceful Temper,
That hearing you the Barons had disclaim'd him,
He now accepts the Legate's Mediation,
And, on such Terms as Honour may accord,
He and his Forces leave our Land in Peace.

Salis. Lose not a Moment then to close this Treaty;
Build we a Bridge of Gold for his Retreat!
And may the recent Dangers we have pass'd,
Never by civil Discord be recall'd.

Fal. There only lives the Error can mislead us.
Let not Self-wounds our native Strength impair,
What rash Invader can have Hope to shake us?
Come the three Corners of the World in Arms,
England no foreign Force shall e'er subdue,
While Prince and Subject to themselves are true.





EPILOGUE.

Spoke by Mrs. *C L I V E*.

O*F all the Helps for Wit so much in Vogue,
This Play has scarce one Hint for Epilogue?
Now, after Tragedy, you know, the Way
Is to come forward, with an Air so gay,
Not to support, — no, no, — to ridicule the Play. }
With flirting Fan, and pointed Wit, so jolly,
Crack Jokes on Virtue, as an unbred Folly.
How often has the Grecian Dame, distress'd,
Been dismal Company — till made a Jest?
And when her prudish Pride warm Love has slighted,
How lustiously her Epilogue delighted!
O! what Enjoyment to a modern Sinner,
To have it prov'd at last — she'd nothing in her!
Then is the Proof of Wit's commanding Pow'r,
When double Entendres make an Aud'ence roar!
When chuckling Rakes, and Witlings void of Grace,
Stare all the blushing Boxes in the Face!
And when the luscious Stroke has kept them under,
Crack! goes the joyous Laugh, in Claps of Thunder!*

*Since Arts, like these, have charm'd a merry Nation,
Why could not Colley play the Wag in fashion?
Shall he pretend to give the Stage new Modes?
Would he have Plays as taste as annual Odes?*

Shall

EPILOGUE.

*Shall he suppose there can be any Sin in
Th' warmest Meaning — wrapp'd in decent Linen?
Something — he ought to have for ev'ry Taste ;
John Trott's an honest, though a vulgar Ghost :
His strong Digest'on thinks fat Food the best.
And when his full Meal's made, cries — “ After all
“ That Epilogue was dev'lish comical !
“ Better, by half, than all their hum-drum Sorrow !
“ I'cod I'll come and hear't again to-morrow !”
What could, in Nature, our Fool's Reason be,
To strike away this Prop from Tragedy ?
Odso ! I've found it now — 'twas — Modesty !
Yes ! modest as the Jay — when he presumes,
To deck his dowdy Muse — with Peacock Plumes !
Yet hold ! — that Flee too hard a Censure flings ;
He's but the Wren, that mounts on Shakespear's Wings ;
Where, while the Eagle soars — he safely sings,
Let then the modern Scenes on Shakespear live,
And what you cannot praise, like Friends, forgive.*

F I N I S.



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